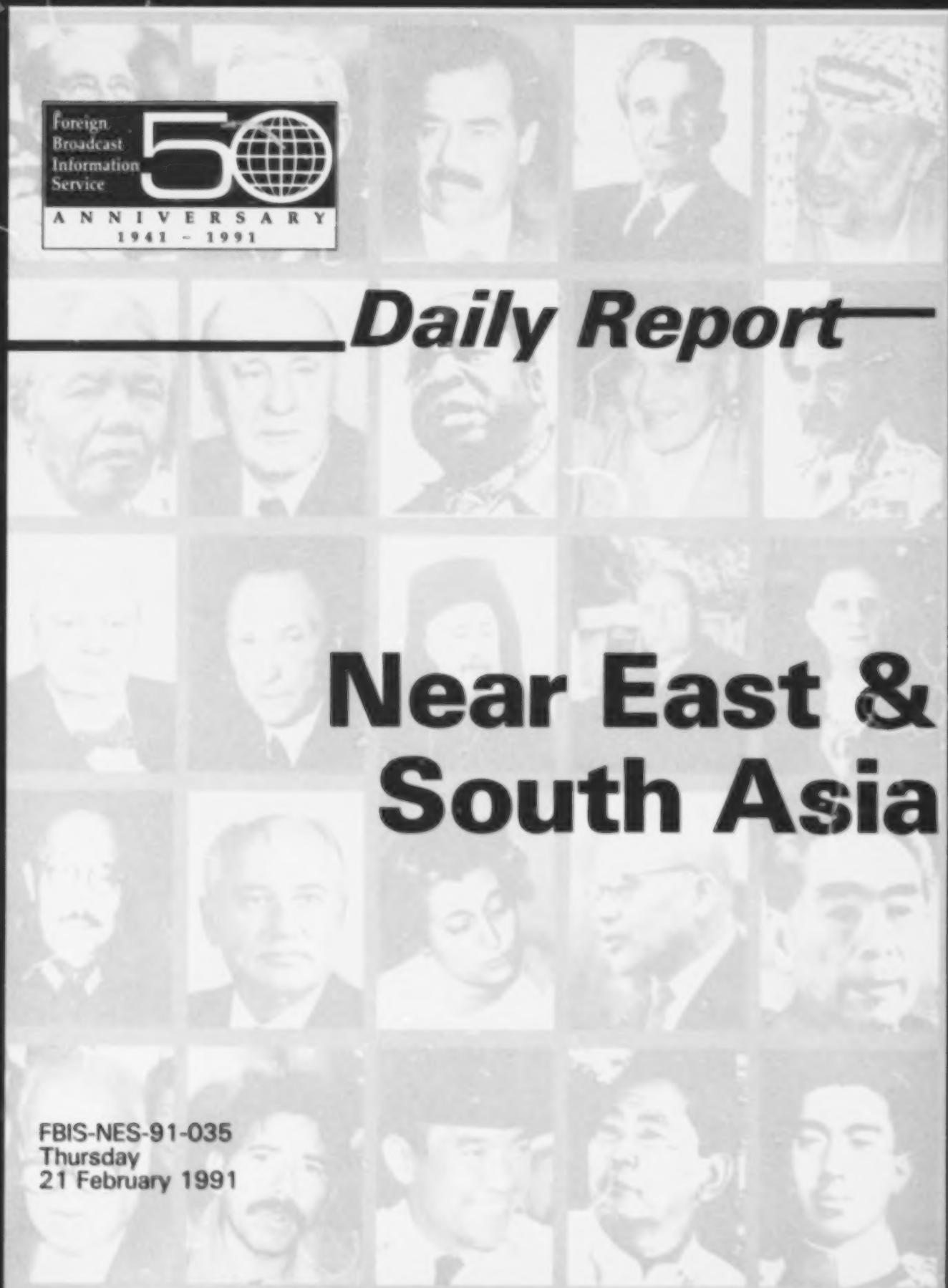

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Inter-Arab Affairs

AMU 'Emergency' Conference Opens in Benghazi

Algeria's Ghozali Arrives

LD2002161891 Algiers APS in English 1106 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Banghazi, 20/2/91 (APS)—The [Algerian] foreign affairs minister, Sid Ahmed Ghozali arrived yesterday in Banghazi (Libya) where he will take part in an extraordinary meeting of the Council to the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) [AMU]. This meeting which will be held on Wednesday, will be devoted to the examination of the situation in the Middle East and in the Gulf and in the light of the last developments which took place in the region. It is worth noting that a preliminary meeting gathered on Tuesday the UMA foreign affairs ministers. [sentence as received]

Conference Begins Work

LD2002184291 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1745 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Benghazi, 20 February (JANA)—The Arab Maghreb Union foreign ministers emergency conference began its work this evening at the Tibesti Hotel in Benghazi.

The conference is being held at the request of the Great Jamahiriyah, in its current AMU chairmanship capacity.

The meeting is attended by the secretary of the popular committee for External Liaison and International Cooperation; Dr. Abdellatif Filali, Moroccan minister of state for foreign affairs; Sid Ahmed Ghozali, Algerian foreign minister; Hasni Ould Didi, Mauritanian minister of foreign affairs and cooperation; and the secretary general for AMU affairs in Tunis.

Issues Statement on Iraqi Plan

LD2002221491 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 1930 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] The emergency meeting of the Arab Maghreb Union foreign ministers ended in Benghazi today. At the end of the meeting the following statement was issued:

The Council of the AMU foreign ministers convened in an emergency session in Benghazi, the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah, on 20 February, after reviewing the grave situation that has resulted from the devastating war now raging in the Gulf area, and in continuation of its efforts, including its call on the UN Security Council to meet to secure a cease-fire and provide an opportunity for finding a political solution to the Gulf crisis. While it expresses its deep regret at the UN Security Council's refusal to hold a public session for achieving a cease-fire, it has decided the following:

1. It considers the Iraqi proposal agreeing to deal with UN Security Council Resolution 660 as a positive step toward finding a political solution to the Gulf crisis within the framework of international legitimacy, and it calls on all sides to respond to this proposal, which underlines Iraq's acceptance of the aforementioned resolution which annuls any justification for the continuation of the war.

2. While the council recalls the position it adopted on 2 September 1990 in Algiers, which contained a categorical rejection of the use of force for solving disputes and rejected the move to starve the Iraqi people to undermine their potentials, it condemns the savage bombing of innocent civilians in Iraq and Kuwait and the complete and deliberate destruction of Iraq's capabilities, including its cultural, and contemporary heritage—a matter that constitutes a blatant overstepping of the UN Security Council resolutions.

3. It warns against the real dangers arising from the flow of material, political, and military support for the Zionist state, which exploited the Gulf war in order to benefit from it by consolidating its military and economic capabilities.

4. It underlines continuing support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people under its sole legitimate representative, the PLO, and supports the Palestinians' popular and tumultuous uprising against Zionist occupation and their opposition to the various methods of Zionist suppression.

5. In view of the grave developments through which the Arab nation is passing, the Council addresses a call for convening an urgent meeting of the Arab foreign ministers in one of the Maghreb capitals to discuss Arab conditions to safeguard the higher interests of the Arab nation and its ability and restore unity of Arab ranks.

6. The Council took notice of the invitation extended to it from the EEC and in this connection the Council of Ministers will contact the European presidency in this respect.

[Dated] 5 Sha'ban 1411 AH, corresponding to 20 February 1991

Condemns U.S. on Libyan POW's

LD2002235791 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1840 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Benghazi, 20 Feb (JANA)—A statement was issued by the emergency conference of the AMU foreign ministers which began its work this evening at Tibesti Hotel in Benghazi. Here is the text of the statement:

The emergency conference of AMU foreign ministers held in Benghazi the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah on 20 February, recalling its previous resolution concerning Libyan POW's in Chad, renews its condemnation of the United States' action of removing these prisoners by force to unknown destinations against their will and without allowing the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC] to obtain the opinion of

these prisoners. The ministers demand that these prisoners be placed under the supervision of the ICRC in accordance with the 4th Geneva Convention.

Sanaa Conference Condemns Western 'Aggression'

NC1702215091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 17 Feb 91

[Statement issued on 12 February by the "popular Arab conference on confronting the imperialist-U.S.-Zionist aggression and its allies and agents and agents against Iraq and the Arab nation held in Sanaa 10-12 February"]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. In the name of God, who said: Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies of God and your enemies. [Koranic verse] Verily, God spoke the truth.

At the invitation of the higher popular committee in defense of Iraq and the Arab nation in the Republic of Yemen and in coordination with the pan-Arab preparatory committee, Arab associations, organizations, political parties, and popular figures held a popular Arab conference on confronting the imperialist-U.S.-Zionist aggression and its allies and agents against Iraq and the Arab nation in Sanaa 10-12 February.

With a high spirit of responsibility, out of their desire to confront the imperialist-Zionist onslaught against the heroic Iraqi people, and to express their anger at the aggressors, their allies, and their agents from the treacherous regimes on the Arab and Islamic levels, the conferees discussed the developments in the battle and the tasks shouldered by the popular Arab and Islamic forces for three days.

The conferees held detailed discussions on the ugly crimes committed daily by the imperialist-Zionist aggressive alliance and the agent Arab rulers tied to this alliance. These crimes are represented by the killing, wounding, and displacing of thousands of civilians, especially children, women, and old men, from among our struggling people in Iraq, the destruction of historic and cultural landmarks in ancient Iraq, and the attacks on hospitals, universities, mosques, churches, kindergartens, schools, factories, and scientific installations. After nearly seven months of blockade and economic war, the U.S. and allied forces are using the greatest arsenals of death to destroy the basic necessities of life, such as public utilities, water and electricity networks, bridges, factories producing food and medicine, and shops.

The United States and its allies are using the unjust and invalid UN Security Council resolutions and the so-called international legitimacy as a pretext for for their deliberate aggression to achieve the following:

A. Destroying Iraq and crushing its military and economic power, which represents a real challenge to Zionist supremacy in the region and which provides a real opportunity for achieving the national and legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people and liberating the occupied Arab territories.

B. Destroying the civilized, progressive, and democratic Arab and Islamic plan, of which Iraq is a firm pillar, controlling the destiny of the Arab nation, dominating the will of its masses, and eliminating its power of independent decitionmaking.

C. Controlling the Arab oil wealth, determining its production and pricing policies, and using oil revenues for U.S. and Western investments at the expense of the Arab countries, which are in greater need of these revenues to tackle their economic, social, and political problems.

D. Protecting the greedy interests of the imperialist forces and their multinational monopolies and linking the wheel of the Arab economy to the machine of the world capitalist system to further impoverish the nation and retard its development.

E. Establishing a new military and security pact under the command of U.S. imperialism to tighten the grip on the Arab nation through the Zionist state, local agents, and hirelings.

Our striving Arab masses, Iraq is fighting the epic mother of battles not just to defend itself and the Arab and Islamic nations, but also on behalf of the Third World, all oppressed peoples, and all those who yearn for freedom and a dignified life. This is because the Atlantic-Zionist invasion aims to punish the proud people of Iraq and make them an example for all peoples who are opposed to the emergence of a U.S.-led empire of the arrogant and the exploiters and plunderers of the peoples' wealth. This decisive battle should decide the role and status of the Arab world in the new world order and its right to unity, independence, and control over its resources as well as its potential for imposing a just solution to the Palestine question. Appreciating the position of the Arab states that have embraced an Arab solution and rejected foreign occupation of Arab territory in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf, the conference appeals to all these countries, especially after the eruption of hostilties, to rise to their pan-Arab responsiblities and call an urgent summit with a view to devoting all their military and economic resources to the battle and severing all relations with the nations waging aggression.

The conference further calls on all the states advocating an Arab solution to defy the Washington-dictated UN Security Council resolution imposing sanctions against Iraq. The conference calls on Algeria and Libya to allocate part of their mounting oil revenues to the support of Iraq and the steadfastness of the PLO and Jordan.

Based on the Islamic bonds between the Arab and Iranian peoples, and given that this is the battle of all of us in which we are pitted against a common enemy, the conferees call on the Muslim Iranian peoples and leaders to boost their contribution to the antiaggression effort and to drive out the foreign forces from the region,

inasmuch as the responsibility for defending its security should be shouldered by its people.

The conference calls on the Soviet Union to adopt a stand independent of the American position, and to play the deterrent role that will stop the aggression against Iraq.

Saluting Iraq's heroic rejection of the age of American-Zionist hegemony, the conference vigorously condemns the Arab regimes that have thwarted an Arab solution, specifically the Saudi, Bahraini, Qatari, and United Arab Emirates regimes which fulfilled the wish of the United States and invited the U.S. and foreign forces to occupy the Arabian Peninsula and desecrate Islamic shrines. The conference also condemns the ruling regimes in the Arab and Islamic states that have sent their armies in defiance of the will of their peoples to join the aggressive American-Atlantic-Zionist machine deployed against Iraq and the Arab nation; namely, those in Egypt, Syria, and Pakistan.

The conference urges the recall of all Arab and Muslim armies from the alliance of aggression, particularly the Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, and Pakistani forces. It appeals to the popular masses of these countries to bring all manner of pressure to bear to achieve this end.

For the post-cold-war new world order trumpeted by war criminal Bush to kick off by attacking our children and the children of the world and by seeking to destroy and humiliate a nation is to underestimate the awareness of peoples.

We emphasize that the U.S. decision to go to war after closing all doors to peaceful and negotiated solutions is unquivocal evidence of the inability of the U.S. President and his administration to play, as they claimed, the alleged leading role in this new world.

The criminal aggression against Iraq must be immediately halted. Serious talks must begin in search of negotiated solutions in accordance with President Saddam Husayn's initiative on 12 August 1990, and the talks must be based on implementing the UN resolutions concerning all the region's problems and issues. They must have the goal of achieving the Israeli withdrawal from Palestine, the Golan, and southern Lebanon, as well as realizing the Palestinian people's legitimate rights to determine their future and set up the independent Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

O Arab strugglers wherever you may be: A nation to which the valiant Iraqi people, the struggling Palestinian people, and the Arab masses belong should enjoy the appropriate position in this world and should be allowed to determine its prosperous future. The conference is quite confident that the people of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, and the people who brought up Ibrahim Hananu, Yusuf al-'Azmah, and Sultan al-Atrash will assume their real position in the battle of Arab fate and future very soon.

While appraising and appreciating the achievements of the Arab East and Arab Maghreb, the conference believes that intensifying the confrontation of the grave hostile onslaught dictates the following:

1. To declare jihad and organize voluntary service in popular military corps to participate in the fighting alongside the Iraqi people and their victorious armed forces;
2. To strike at the interests of the United States and its allied countries, liquidate their mainstays, and block their military and supply routes by refusing facilities for their aircraft and ships;
3. To consider the 17th day of every month a day for effective solidarity with Iraq. On this day, popular demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, and fund-raising should be made in all the Arab and Islamic states. Prayers should also be held for the souls of martyrs;
4. To invite all the Arab trade unions and popular and cultural organizations to intensify and coordinate their efforts to guarantee the continuation of the dispatch of the necessary medical teams and equipment to Iraq;
5. To establish an Arab financial fund in support of the battle and Iraq's steadfastness, and to organize fund-raising campaigns on the widest scale in all the Arab states.
6. To call on all forces and parties regardless of their ideology, politics, and schools of thought to pool their resources and direct their struggle within the framework of confronting the imperialist-Zionist aggression, which aims to destroy our existence, our future, and our Arab and Islamic culture.
7. To form media and cultural committees in all Arab countries to confront the hostile media, expose the psychological warfare, and highlight the heroic deeds of the Iraqi Army and people.
8. To form a secretariat for this conference whose headquarters will be in Amman. This will follow up the implementation of the resolutions, prepare for the coming conference, and continue establishing national committees to confront the imperialist invasion and back Iraq, and to coordinate between them and organize the activities of the Arab and Islamic forces.

Warm greetings to the steadfastness of the heroic Iraqi people, brave army, and courageous leader, the knight of the Arab nation, Saddam Husayn. Greetings to the people of the blessed intifadah, the Palestinian people. Glory and immortality to the martyrs of the mother of battles and the Palestinian revolution.

Greetings to the resisting Lebanese people, greetings to the courageous role played by our struggling masses in the Arab Maghreb countries who affirm their Arab, Islamic affiliation and its participation in the battle for Arab destiny.

Greetings to the Arab masses, greetings to the Islamic peoples who reject and confront aggression, greetings to the African peoples who reject aggression. The conference affirms the importance of strengthening ties with

the peoples of Africa as an embodiment of the historical relations of struggle that united the Arabs and Africans.

Greetings to the peace movements, the antiwar movements in Europe and America, and all good men in all parts of the world.

Shame and ignominy for the war criminals, Bush, Mitterrand, and Major, the inheritors of the grudges of the old colonialism, and all their allies, agents, and traitorous rulers.

At the conclusion of its work, the conference voices its great gratitude to the Yemeni people and leadership, who by hosting the conference have affirmed their continuous contribution to the Arab nation's battles. If God supports you, you will not be defeated.

[Dated] Sanaa, 12 February 1991

Islamic Affairs

ICO Council Meeting To Open in Cairo 21 Feb

NC2002082991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0600 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Feb (MENA)—The extraordinary meeting of the ministerial and summit councils of the Islamic Conference Organization [ICO], which comprise 10 [number as received] Islamic states, will open in Cairo tomorrow. The ministerial council is made up of the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Morocco, Kuwait, Maldives, Senegal, Gabon, the PLO, and Egypt. [Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic at 0500 GMT on 20 February in a similar report adds "the countries represented in the meeting are Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco, Kuwait, Maldives, Senegal, Gabon and the PLO."]

Egyptian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sayyid Qasim al-Masri has stated that ICO Secretary General Hamid al-Ghabid will present a working paper to the meeting on the ICO's attempts to find a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis. He added that the idea of holding this meeting came up during al-Ghabid's meeting with Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, in Cairo last week.

Ambassador al-Masri added that eight of the 10 council members have already notified the ICO general secretariat of their acceptance to attend the meeting.

It is worth noting that Kuwait, represented by its Foreign Minister Sabah al-Ahmad, will chair the meetings of the ICO summit council, while Egypt will chair the ministerial council.

The one-day meeting will discuss the Gulf crisis and efforts to find a peaceful settlement to the Iraqi-Kuwaiti dispute.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid will deliver the opening speech, in which he will emphasize Egypt's eagerness to find a peaceful settlement for the issue.

Kuwaiti Minister Arrives

LD2002204191 London KUNA in Arabic 2000 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Formerly Kuwait KUNA]

[Excerpts] Cairo, 20 February, KUNA—Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister, arrived here this evening to take part in a meeting of the summit bureau body of the Islamic Conference Organization, in which 10 countries will participate. [passage omitted]

In a statement to journalists, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad stressed that Kuwait reaffirms its constant stance on the Gulf crisis, represented in the full implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions which express international legitimacy's demand for unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from the state of Kuwait and the return to legitimacy to it.

He exposed the inhuman practices of the Iraqi occupation forces against the unarmed Kuwaiti people, the execution of 70 citizens without trial, and the inhuman torture of other citizens. He asked that the international community's attention be drawn to these tyrannical practices, which violate human and moral principles. [passage omitted]

[(Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic at 2100 GMT on 20 February carries a similar report and adds the following: "In reply to a question about the proposed agenda of the meeting, which will start tomorrow, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad said that the Gulf crisis and the deep split in the Islamic world and among all Muslims, which has been caused by the unjust Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, will be the main focus of discussion."]

Comments on Soviet Initiative

NC2102115291 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1110 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—Following a meeting between President Husni Mubarak and some Islamic foreign ministers today, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir, Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister, was asked about Kuwait's stand on the Soviet initiative. He said that he has received nothing official on the initiative, and he only reads about it in the press. He said the only information he has is that Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz might arrive in Moscow tonight to give Iraq's reply to the Soviet initiative.

The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister said his country welcomes the implementation of the Security Council resolutions, above all Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

He stressed that the Kuwaiti youths will be the vanguards in liberating their country, together with their brothers.

In reply to a question on who is to blame for the continuation of the war after the Soviet initiative, the allies or Iraq, the Kuwaiti foreign minister said that the one who does not implement the Security Council Resolutions 660 to 678 is the one to blame. Therefore, Iraq is to blame and nobody else.

Islamic Unification Leader Criticizes Neutrality

NC1402085791 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 13 Feb 91 p 3

[Text] Tripoli, AL-NAHAR—Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of the Islamic Unification Movement, has said: "In spite of U.S. President George Bush's statements, which confirm his determination to carry on with the air raids to destroy what is left of Iraq, many Arabs and the world have remained silent over this ugly crime that is being committed against an Arab and Muslim people, who are being massacred without any denunciation being heard."

He added: "By staying neutral on an issue of the magnitude of this crime, which will make us lose Iraq after we have lost Palestine, means we are becoming partners in realizing the Israeli dream, when Baghdad falls and when the Atlantic alliance settles in the heart of the Muslim world."

Relief Organization Sets Up Amman Headquarters

NC1702165491 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17 Feb 91 p 3

[By Ilya Nasrallah, JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[Text] Amman—An international relief organisation that will provide assistance to victims of natural disasters and wars has established headquarters in Amman, Dr. Ahmad al-Tar'ani, president of the organisation, announced Saturday.

The International Islamic Medical Relief Organisation, made up of members from five continents will supply food and medical supplies to Iraqi victims of the Zionist-colonialist aggression on Iraq, Dr al-Tar'ani said during a press conference at the Islamic Hospital.

Dr. al-Tar'ani said the organisation consisted of doctors and specialists from Jordan, the Arab World, Africa, Europe, Asia and the Americas.

He told the JORDAN TIMES later the volunteers came from 25 different Islamic organisations throughout the Islamic and non-Islamic world. They would coordinate to provide medical and food supplies to areas stricken by war.

Dr. al-Tar'ani said that the organisation has established committees to raise money for its noble and humanitarian mission, and would maintain close ties to Islamic organisations worldwide. Dr. al-Tar'ani also said the organisation would train special teams to aid the needy, victims of disasters and wars, and to offer physiotherapy assistance to the handicapped. The agency would participate in civil defence and rescue operations with other national organisations.

The organisation Sunday will dispatch nine medical specialists, three male nurses, and a pharmacist with 10 trucks laden with food and medical supplies and equipment to Iraq, Dr. al-Tar'ani said.

He said that Iraq was now the top priority for the organisation which, he said, plans later to establish health centres, hospitals and clinics in Islamic countries in other times of need.

According to Dr. al-Tar'ani, the organisation welcomes financial and in-kind contributions to be channelled through the Islamic Hospital in Amman.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Views Soviet Peace Plan, Baghdad Visit

LD2002201791 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, gave our two colleagues Hallub Mohammed and Nouara, our radio reporters in Tunis, a lengthy interview which is due to be broadcast tomorrow during the 'Mirror' program. We now give you this excerpt on 'Arafat's reply to the latest Soviet initiative and the background to this plan.

[Begin 'Arafat recording] This Soviet move is in fact a Soviet-Iraqi-Arab-Iranian move. We proudly say that a PLO delegation had been in the Soviet Union, and during Tariq 'Aziz's stay [in Moscow] our delegation was also in the Soviet Union. When Primakov visited Baghdad recently, I was myself in Baghdad to contribute to these efforts. I was also in Baghdad during Primakov's two previous visits and for the same purpose. As you know, my brother President Chadli Bendjedid went on a wide tour which included all these countries [unspecified] to stop the war, but the U.S.-Zionist-NATO planning and conspiracy are not, as I said before, for the sake of any Gulf state but to destroy Iraq and its strength, which is also the strength of the Arabs.

You are asking me about the Soviet Union. I can tell you I have just received, and I mean just now, an important piece of news saying that a military delegation from the Soviet chief of staff arrived in Baghdad tonight from the Soviet Union. This delegation will meet with a number of Iraqi military commanders, according to the head of the delegation who talked to a WAFA [Palestinian News Agency] correspondent in Baghdad. In other words, the WAFA correspondent in Baghdad met the delegation and talked to them about this subject. [end recording]

PLO To Participate in Cairo Islamic Conference

NC2002160591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Feb (MENA)—The state of Palestine will participate in the extraordinary meetings to be held by the Islamic ministerial and summit councils of the Islamic Conference Organization in Cairo tomorrow, Thursday.

PLO Executive Committee member Jamal al-Surani will head the Palestinian delegation to these meetings. The Palestinian delegation comprises Salman al-Harifi, adviser to President 'Arafat for African affairs; Muhammad Subayh, the PLO representative at the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization; Sa'id Kamal, Palestinian ambassador in Cairo; Zuhdi al-Qidrah, Fatah representative in Cairo; Rabi' al-Turk; and Amin Abu-Hasirah, the PLO representative in Gabon.

PFLP Urges EC To Resume 'Arafat Contacts

NC2002152491 Paris AFP in English 1504 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Damascus, Feb 20 (AFP)—The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), called on the European Community (EC) Wednesday to lift restrictions on contacts with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasir 'Arafat.

The PFLP, one of the PLO's three biggest groups, asked the European Community to "review its position."

"The Middle East will know neither peace nor stability if the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the creation of an independent state under the government of the PLO, the (Palestinians') sole and legitimate representative, are not realised," the PFLP said in a statement.

The PFLP said "the European attitude concurs with secret plans aimed at excluding the PLO and at bypassing Palestinian national rights."

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos, current chairman of the EC's council of ministers, said Tuesday the Community had decided against meeting Mr. 'Arafat because of his "openly pro-Iraqi statements."

According to a Belgian Government spokesman Wednesday, there will not be a total freeze on contacts with the PLO and Mr. 'Arafat, but a reduction.

The Syrian-based PFLP is led by George Habash.

Algeria

Islamic Salvation Front Spokesman on Aid for Iraq

LD2002233791 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 2200 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Last Friday [15 February] at the al-Sunnah mosque in Bab el Oued [in Algiers] Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] second in command Ali Belhadj announced that in a week the first batch of volunteers will be sent to perform jihad alongside the Iraqi people. To shed more light on the matter, our colleague Jamila Khalfaoui contacted Abbas El Medani, the official spokesman of the FIS, who first answered a question on the type of volunteers who have gone already as a first batch to Iraq.

[Begin recording] [El Medani] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The Algerian people are doing much to prepare for helping fraternal Iraq in its time of trial, thank God. In view of this, the FIS appointed a committee specially for this.

There is a big group of those who wish to go to (?Iraq). The criteria which were drawn up require specialized qualifications in medicine, doctors and medical assistants, and warfare specialists.

Thank God, an excellent group was found. God willing, they will soon go there and we will tell you how many there are.

[Khalfaoui] Was there any coordination with the Iraqi Embassy here in Algiers?

[El Medani] Coordination exists, with God's grace. They will find people there who will receive them and direct them. Matters are going as well as they can.

[Khalfaoui] According to Ali Belhadj, the FIS asked the Algerian authorities to make two planes available, at least for sending medicines and blankets to Iraq. What was the authorities' answer?

[El Medani] The truth is that we asked on behalf of FIS to be helped with two planes. Their cargo of milk and medicines is ready. The answer of the authorities was that only via the Red Crescent could this be done, although the Red Crescent until now has not shown any competence in carrying out this task. We are still negotiating with them, because we are afraid that they might be handed over to the Red Cross afterward. We are afraid that these matters might go astray. We are thinking about other methods, God willing. [end recording]

Paper Cited on 'Terrible' Damage in Iraq

LD1902111391 Algiers APS in English 1029 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Algiers, 19 Feb (APS)—The daily "EL MOUDJAHID" released on Tuesday a terrible testimony from his special envoy in Iraq on the martyrdom inflicted by the anti-Iraq coalition on defenseless civilian populations a slaughter authorized by the UN and that no word, adjective, or sentence can faithfully report the situation.

"What we have seen at the hospital is atrocious. Everything recalls us this documentary on the deported persons of Hitler: corpses with arms and legs amputated, women delivering before term, fetuses of two, three, and four months old put in plastic bags to be buried, orphan babies of four, five, and six months old crying or dying from starvation, disfigured children".

"A dismembered population, without its body, a human slaughter ordered by Bush who takes as a pretext the liberation of Kuwait on behalf of the international law and legacy to make a state kneel down and to dismember women, children, and old peoples" the EL MOUDJAHID correspondent wrote, describing the hard everyday life imposed to inhabitants of whole Iraqi cities by a coalition savagely acting "on behalf of international law".

U.S. Military Said Losing 'Information War'

LD1702221591 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 17 Feb 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] The American contempt toward the American citizen's intelligence and the intelligence of every wise person on earth is strange. It is no longer a secret that they have been transporting their wounded to Djibouti by air now that the field hospitals have become full to the brim in the Saudi desert. It is no longer a secret that large numbers of wounded have also been received on the island of Cyprus. It has become public knowledge that the American forces requisitioned the Saudi military hospital and closed it to all so that it could cope with treating the Americans who have been wounded in the battles, and put their dead in coffins and embalm them so that delay in shipping is possible before they are returned to American towns. This delay allows the rage in these towns against the aggression on Iraq to calm down before the coffins start a wave of anger on American streets.

Nevertheless, the American military claims that it has not suffered except for a very small number of casualties and dead in the Desert Storm operation. It is true that it is natural such statements should be made during war to lift the morale of the soldiers and to undermine the morale of the enemy. It is also true that the American side controls the sources of combat news and some combat results, but this contempt for the minds cannot be accepted by anyone. The American field command would be better advised to release even half the truth. The news that leaks around it leaves much room for guessing the number of dead and wounded at the hands of the Iraqi forces in light of the facts we have just mentioned. This also means that America has lost its information war in this war.

Egypt

'Abd-al-Majid Comments on Gulf Situation

Views Soviet Initiative

NC2102112691 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1050 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Feb (MENA)—Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has stated that if the Soviet proposal will lead Iraq to comply with the UN Security Council resolution, this step will help put an end to the war for which Iraq is responsible.

'Abd-al-Majid noted that from the information received, the Soviet initiative is based on the need to implement all UN Security Council resolutions. And it is natural that the implementation of these resolutions should begin with a full and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. [words indistinct]

Asked about a call by the foreign ministers of the Arab Maghreb Union to convene an Arab foreign ministers conference to discuss this crisis, 'Abd-al-Majid said: When we receive information about this meeting, we will comment on it. We have learned about this meeting through the media and when we receive information, we will consult with the brothers and define our stand on this call.

Asked about UN Security Council Resolution 674 stipulating that Iraq should pay compensations to the countries badly affected by the invasion of Kuwait, 'Abd-al-Majid said: All resolutions issued by the Security Council since Iraq's 2 August invasion of Kuwait should be implemented, starting from Resolution 660 to Resolution 678.

Calls Soviet Initiative Favorable

NC2102095491 Paris AFP in English 0930 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Cairo, Feb 21 (AFP)—Egypt on Thursday welcomed the Soviet initiative to end the war in the Gulf.

"From the information we have received, this initiative is based on the need to apply... all the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council," Foreign Minister 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid told reporters after a meeting with President Husni Mubarak.

The resolutions have demanded an immediate and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

"We have favorably received the Soviet initiative," said Mr. 'Abd-al-Majid, whose country is a key Arab participant in a U.S.-led anti-Iraqi alliance.

With allied troops poised to launch a massive ground offensive against Iraq, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz was due in Moscow shortly to provide Soviet leaders with Baghdad's response to the plan.

No details of the proposal have been officially disclosed but they are reported to provide for an Iraqi withdrawal, coupled with Soviet assurances on the future of Iraq.

"Any application of these resolutions must begin with the total and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait," Mr. 'Abd-al-Majid said.

"If the Soviet proposal leads Iraq to respect the United Nations resolutions, this will surely allow for an end to the destructive war—for which Iraq is responsible."

Views Iraqi Withdrawal, Postwar Moves

NC2102013291 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2015 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Feb (MENA)—Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has said that what Egypt wants from Iraq is immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

In an interview with the magazine AL-MUSAWWAR to be published Friday, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait without any delay in complying with international law and international will. He explained that President Saddam Husayn can stop this war today by withdrawing unconditionally in accordance with Arab League and Security Council resolutions.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that Iraq's recent offer of conditional withdrawal from Kuwait is impracticable because it is linked to impossible conditions.

Asked whether the nature of the operations goes beyond the bounds of the authorization granted by Security Council Resolution 678, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid asserted that it is Saddam Husayn himself who is destroying Iraq, not the allied forces, because he could stop the war with a single word. He added that if Iraq decides today to actually withdraw from Kuwait, it is unthinkable that the bombardment and military campaign would continue against him.

On the limits and features of the postcrisis security arrangements within the context of the new Arab order, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid explained that these arrangements should emanate from within the region, not be imposed, because responsibility will basically lie with the countries of the region. Therefore, the arrangements should be approved by these countries.

Regarding this, he emphasized Egypt's concern to cooperate with the Arab brothers in the Gulf. He added that this cooperation has already begun through periodic contacts among Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stressed that these security arrangements do not target anyone and that they aim, in the first place, to guarantee cooperation and stability in the region. He added that there are no restrictions on cooperation among Arab and neighboring countries.

Furthermore, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid asserted that Iraq will remain a basic part of the region. He said: We are eager to maintain Iraq's unity, regional security, and territorial integrity. He added that no power can ever get Iraq out of the "equation" in the postcrisis phase, unless the Iraqis themselves destroy or disrupt this equation.

On the possibility of Iran's participation in any regional security system, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid expressed hope that Iran would start playing its role peacefully, defined by the spirit of cooperation and understanding, and not in the spirit of domination. He pointed out that Iran is a Gulf country and an important Islamic state that enjoys status and potential.

Asked what Israel's position would be, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid asserted that it was necessary to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories. He added that Israel has to behave as a state searching for peace and not as a state that wants to impose itself by force. Also, Israel should come to the conclusion that any future for peace in the region will greatly benefit it and will cause it no harm. Israel should realize and appreciate this in its future relations.

On the means to resolve the Palestine question, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid pointed out that the Palestinians have harmed their cause by taking Saddam Husayn's side. The result was that the Palestine question has lost many supporters.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that Egypt is continuing its contacts with all concerned international parties to set up an international peace conference to resolve the Palestine question. He noted that even though the PLO has lost many supporters, the Palestine question cannot be resolved without its participation, because it is considered the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Asked whether the United States has made any promises or given any guarantees to resolve the Palestine question following Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stressed what has been said by senior U.S. officials on the need to find a just, lasting solution to the Palestine question, even to the Arab-Israeli conflict in its entirety.

On the mass destruction weapons that exist in the region, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid called for the elimination of these weapons, citing President Mubarak's suggestion to the United Nations last April, which emphasizes the importance of eliminating mass destruction weapons, provided that this applies to all countries of the region, including Israel.

Cairo Radio Comments on Soviet Peace Proposal

'Propagandist' Conditions Noted

NC2002153291 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1248 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Commentary by Ibrahim Wahbi: "The Gulf at a Crossroads Between the Soviet Initiative and a Ground War"]

[Text] The world's attention regarding the Gulf situation is currently focused on two pivotal developments; namely, the Soviet initiative and the ground attack expected to be launched to liberate Kuwait. One of the two developments will have to make way for the other. The first provision contained in the Soviet initiative calls for an unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait. However, the initiative contains two or three other provisions which the leaders of the coalition stopped at. They did so because they felt that these two points are by themselves preconditions, despite the fact that the initiative begins by stating that Iraq accepts an unconditional withdrawal.

President Bush said that the Soviet initiative falls well short of what can be accepted. Some view this reaction as a rejection of the initiative, while others view it as a reflection of a position that can be debated and negotiated by Moscow and Washington. If the initiative is categorically rejected, the ground attack will then become inevitable and imminent. Even though it has not thus far opposed such a ground attack, the Soviet Union said that it would create a new situation, which it failed to explain on the international scene. Regardless of whether the Soviet initiative is accepted or rejected, the deterioration of the Iraqi position, which looks eager to offer numerous initiatives—all expressing a readiness to withdraw unconditionally—means that the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was a mistake in the first place, that the failure to heed counsel regarding the consequences to the Iraqi people and the region was reckless conduct, and that the victims of this position were in the several thousands. Furthermore, the attempts of the Iraqi ruler to insist that some other conditions must be met may expedite the launching of the ground offensive—which will also produce its own victims.

In fact, the conditions contained in the Soviet initiative, or what can be viewed as conditions, are aimed only at saving face or guaranteeing the survival of the Iraqi regime. However, it should be observed that the deteriorating situation in Iraq makes it imperative that Iraq stop fighting, whether this objective is attained by some conditions being met or failing to be met. The evidence that we advance to substantiate this argument is that only 72 hours after the launching of the first initiative by Iraq, which contained seven provisions or conditions, Baghdad accepted a Soviet plan that reduced these conditions to only three. Baghdad did not call them conditions. The inevitability of an unconditional withdrawal is the first provision contained in this plan. The situation in which the Iraqi troops are operating is very

bad. If they were to face a ground offensive, these troops would fight without air cover, now that a significant portion of the air force has found its way to Iran; that another considerable portion of this air force has been destroyed; that a large percentage of Iraqi bases, bombers, and rockets have been hit; and that the Iraqi leadership has made erroneous decisions which weakened the morale of the Iraqi troops because they are not convinced of the use of occupying fraternal Arab lands.

The effects of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait will not cease to exist with the mere Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. The Iraqi invasion has weakened the Arab nation, bolstered non-Arab states such as Israel and Iran, caused a decline in the status of Arab oil, and caused the death of hundreds of thousands of lives. Entire Iraqi might could have been saved so that it could contribute to the Arab nation's efforts to take back usurped rights, regain the occupied lands, and build a noble Arab image on the international scene.

Iraq has not engaged in war for six hours or six days. No, the war has been waged by a single party. The duration of the war is only calculated after ground battles are fought and when the results of these battles are made public. The whole world supports and demands the restoration of Kuwaiti lands and the preservation of Iraq. However, this requires the removal of all deceptive and propagandist conditions which shroud the Iraqi ruler's desire to withdraw. This is necessary if the Iraqi people and Army are to be spared further suffering and useless battles.

No Signs of Iraqi Acceptance

NC1902163991 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1240 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Ahmad Sha'ban commentary: "Will Soviet Efforts End the Region's Crisis?"]

[Text] The world is in a state of expectancy as it awaits the outcome of the current diplomatic efforts to obtain a cease-fire and end the current crisis that the people of the region, notably the Iraqi people themselves, are suffering under. The world is waiting to see if these efforts will lead to a breakthrough and a total Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait or if the Iraqi ruler will persist in his stubbornness and end the last hope of saving himself and his people, indeed the entire region, from the expected destruction in the event the current war continues and ground battles begin.

As to the contents of the Soviet initiative, the current pivot of diplomatic efforts, and the proposals, which have not so far been officially announced and about which speculations are rife—such as the call for a total and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in return for a guarantee that Iraq will not be subjected to any attack by the coalition forces once it begins the withdrawal, keeping the Iraqi ruler in power, and not harming him personally—we say that all these matters are not new. Indeed, more than one Arab official has taken these same positions, including President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, who told the Iraqi president that they are concerned with safeguarding Iraq's people and its system of government and expressed total willingness to make every possible effort to defend Iraq if it is subjected to any danger.

We do not want to jump to conclusions and say that the Iraqi president will accept or respond to the Soviet effort, particularly in light of the Iraqi Revolution Command Council's statement that set conditions impossible for the international community to accept. Nevertheless, we say there are still no signs that Iraq will accept the Soviet plan and agree to withdraw, despite the fact that the Soviet president's adviser announced that Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz told the Soviet leaders that Iraq agrees to withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait, which effectively means nullifying all the results of the 2 August operation.

An important question remains, however. Was it necessary for all the destruction and devastation that befell the Iraqi people as a result of the war, now more than a month old and during which Iraq lost many men and much equipment and capabilities, to happen? Is it the Iraqi president's pastime to destroy Iraq's people and capabilities, particularly after the devastation caused to Iraq in a long and destructive war with Iran, to be followed by the destruction of Iraqi military capabilities by the attacks of the coalition forces? Will Iraq's people and Army forgive their ruler for these acts?

If the Soviet initiative, according to the reports, calls on the world to keep Saddam as ruler of Iraq and if the world accepts this view, will the Iraqi people agree to this and keep this ruler in power after the destruction and devastation he has caused them? Will the Iraqi Army agree to keep in power a ruler who has destroyed the country's military, human, and technical capabilities? These are the questions that the Iraqi people and Army should answer if the crisis ends and Iraq carries out a total withdrawal from Kuwait.

Paper Views Mideast Postwar Settlement

PM1902165091 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 14 Feb 91 p 1

[Chief editor's article: "Elements of Tension!"]

[Text] The liberation of Kuwait and the elimination of Iraqi aggression may mean the end of the war, but it will not mean the end of tension and the return of stability to the region.

Tension in the Middle East has not sprung from a vacuum. The turbulence which has existed for a long time now has its causes and reasons. These causes still exist and could lead to another conflagration if we do not tackle them immediately.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is regarded as a major element of tension and a source of turbulence in the region.

Tension, violence, and terrorism will continue in the Middle East until the Palestine question is resolved and the Palestinians regain their rights.

It is the duty of the international community to act forcefully and positively, as it has done during the Gulf crisis, in order to put an end to this conflict which has gone on far too long.

Another cause of tension in the region is the arms race and the lack of a stable security system.

The arms race is governed by certain security considerations and the fear of the unknown, in view of the existing state of war between the Arabs and Israel.

Experience has shown that war does not resolve issues and that stockpiling weapons does not necessarily guarantee victory or supremacy.

Iraq has built up a vast arsenal, yet it has failed to achieve its ambitions regarding the Gulf's resources.

Israel also possesses a vast arsenal of conventional and nonconventional weapons, yet this arsenal has failed to guarantee its security. The Israeli population is still living in anxiety and tension.

So it has become essential that, when this war is over, all efforts be directed toward tackling the issue of the arms race in the region and channeling the funds being spent on armaments toward development and reconstruction.

Success here demands, first of all, the resolution of the Palestine question.

Another element of tension in the region is the wide gap between the national incomes and living standards of the Arab states.

The time has come to tackle this situation courageously and realistically. After the war we could set up a new organization along the lines of the World Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The capital of such an organization could be contributed by the Gulf states and the big powers such as the United States, Japan, Germany, and Europe. The task of this organization will be to finance development projects in the poor Arab countries, without any pressure from the donor countries.

Once again, the end of the war does not mean the end of tension or the restoration of stability. It is work to remove the causes of tensions that will restore stability.

It is our duty in Egypt, and in fact in every Arab country, to ask ourselves now: What must be done after the war?

Tunisia

Ben Ali Announces Government Reshuffle 20 Feb

LD2002180291 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali this morning had a meeting at the Palace of the Republic in Carthage with Mr. Hamed Karoui, the prime minister. The Presidency of the Republic has issued the following communique:

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali has decided to introduce a Cabinet reshuffle; the government will be as follows: Prime minister: Hamed Karoui

Minister of justice: Abderrahim Zouari

Minister, director of the Presidential Office: Mohamed Jeri

Foreign minister: Habib Ben Yahya

Minister of defense: Habib Boulares

Interior minister: Abdallah Kallel

Finance minister: Mohamed Ghanouchi

Minister of national economy: Sadok Rabah

Minister of planning and regional development: Mustapha Nabli

Minister of agriculture: Mouldi Zouaoui

Minister for the domain of the states [state land and estate properties]: Mustapha Bouaziz

Minister of equipment and housing: Ahmed Friaa

Minister of transport: Faouzi Belkahia

Minister of tourism and handicraft: Mohamed Jegham

Minister of communications: Habib Lazreg

Minister of education and sciences: Mohamed Charfi

Minister of culture: Moncer Rouissi

Minister of public health: Dali Jazy

Minister of social affairs: Ahmed Smaoui

Minister of vocational training and employment: Taoufik Cheikhrouhou

Minister of youth and childhood: Mohamed Saad

[secretaries of state]

Secretary-general of the Government: Mohamed Habib Belhaj Said

Secretary of state to the prime minister, in charge of religious affairs: Ali Chabbi

Secretary of state to the prime minister, in charge of information: Hedi Grioui

Secretary of state to the prime minister, in charge of scientific research: Sadok Chaabane

Secretary of state to the foreign minister: Noureddine Mejdoub:

Secretary of state to the foreign minister, in charge of Maghreb affairs: Hamadi Khouini

Secretary of state to the interior minister, in charge of local communities: Rafik Belhaj Kacem

Secretary of state to the minister of agriculture, in charge of water resources: Ameur Horchani

Secretary of state to the minister of education and sciences: Mongi Bousnina

Secretary of state to the minister of social affairs: Mrs. Nabiha Gueddana.

New Appointment in RCD Leadership Reported

LD2002181991 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, chairman of the Democratic Constitutional Rally [RCD], has appointed Mr. Chedli Neffati as secretary-general of the RCD. He also appointed the members of the Political Bureau. They are: Hamed Karoui, deputy chairman of the rally.

Chedli Neffati, secretary-general of the rally.

Abdallah Kallel, treasurer of the rally.

Abderrahim Zouari, Mohamed Jeri, and Habibi Boulares: members.

Kuwait

Foreign Minister: 'Nothing Serious' in Iraqi Offer

PM2002155591 Cairo AL-ANBA' in Arabic 17 Feb 91 p 1

[Nawwaf al-Shamri report: "Sabah al-Ahmad Tells AL-ANBA': The Initiative Is an Act of Procrastination To Obstruct Implementation of Security Council Resolutions"—formerly Kuwait AL-ANBA']

[Text] Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has reaffirmed Kuwait's rejection, part and parcel, of the statement issued by the Iraqi Revolution Command Council. It was not so much an initiative, he said, as a new complication and procrastination to obstruct implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, and it also brought no new ideas and ran contrary to the international will and consensus demanding implementation of all the Security Council resolutions. That is why, he added, it is rejected and unacceptable to Kuwait and the world states.

In a statement to AL-ANBA', he said that the Iraqi initiative was an exercise in procrastination and deception which the tyrant regime is very good at but, like previous attempts, the initiative which that regime thought would succeed has failed and the whole world has exposed its objectives.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad declared that no initiative, whether Iraqi or otherwise, would be accepted unless it requested implementation of all UN Security Council resolutions.

On Jordan's support for the Iraqi regime's initiative, he pointed out that Jordan has supported and sided with Iraq from the beginning and that such an attitude, therefore, was not strange coming from a state which has broken Arab ranks and backed wrong against right.

That Jordanian position, he said, will not affect our cause, supported by the whole world, which insists on complete and unconditional Iraqi withdrawal and restoration of the legitimate authority under the leadership of his highness the Amir, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah and his government..

On Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz' visit to Moscow and to what extent it was linked to the Iraqi initiative, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad said: As I heard from the Soviet officials when I was there two days ago, the Soviet Union is fully committed to all the UN Security Council resolutions and accepts no alternative to these resolutions. We should therefore wait until after the visit to see what results it produces.

He added: I am sure that the Soviet Union will not change its position regarding the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions, particularly as there is nothing serious about the Iraqi proposal, which includes unacceptable conditions that are not in line with the Security Council resolutions and are totally rejected.

Concluding his statement, Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad said: We are confident that our beloved Kuwait will be liberated in the near future and the criminal Iraqi aggression will suffer a crushing defeat as a result of Iraq's intransigence and closure of all doors to peace. We are determined to rebuild Kuwait and restore it to what it was before and even better. The world will be witness to our determination, and Kuwait will once again be an oasis of security and stability and will resume its renowned Arab, Islamic, and international roles.

Reportage on Al-Ahmad's Visit to Romania

WA1502155691

For Romanian reportage on the visit to Romania by Shaykh Nasir Muhammad al-Ahmad, minister of state for foreign affairs, including reports on his talks with Romanian President Ion Iliescu and Foreign Affairs State Secretary Romulus Neagu, please see the Romania section of the 14 February East Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Saudi Arabia

Joint Forces Issue Military Communique 34

LD2002194891 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Military Communique No. 34, issued by the Joint Forces and Theater of Operations Command in Riyadh on 20 February]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate: Victory from God and conquest are near. [Koranic verse]

Military Communique No. 34, issued by the Command of the Joint Forces and Operations Theater in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on the 35th day of Operation Desert Storm, 20 February:

We thank you for your participation, and we are happy to summarize for you the events of the last 24 hours:

Yesterday, units of the Saudi, Egyptian, and Kuwaiti land forces engaged in an artillery shelling, helped by the joint air force with an intensive air bombardment. This operation led to the destruction of the following: six buildings, eight tanks, two observation posts, three troop carriers, and two artillery pieces.

Yesterday evening artillery of the Egyptian forces shelled a number of positions of the aggressor with 122 mm guns. Losses have not yet been assessed.

The joint air force is still engaged in interdiction operations and attacks against command, control, and communications posts, and the units of the Republican Guard, in addition to air reconnaissance and early

warning operations. The total number of sorties of the allied forces since the beginning of Operation Desert Storm has now exceeded 86,000 sorties, of which our Air Force has carried out more than 5,500.

Yesterday evening, minesweepers of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces concluded the minesweeping operation in the region of the east of al-Khafji, and, thanks be to God, no mines were found in that region. Likewise, at dawn today, eight sea mines were detected in the Arab Gulf waters by U.S. naval forces and the Saudi Aramco [Arabian-American Oil Company] Company. One of them was blown up, three were lost, and work is still under way to blow up the remaining four.

A U.S. ground forces unit launched a probing operation, using Apache and Chinook helicopters. During this operation, the unit was able to shell fortified positions. This led to the capture of between 450 and 500 of the aggressor's men. This took place at about 1400 today, or rather at 1345. We do not have details, detailed information, except the approximate number of prisoners, that the operation was initially carried out by means of four helicopters which shelled the fortified positions, and between 450 and 500 men surrendered to these forces. Big Chinook helicopters were brought in and transported the prisoners away after they were searched to make sure that they did not have ammunitions or explosives for blowing up the helicopters.

Kuwaiti Jets Reportedly Hit Iraqi Battalions

NC1902221091 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1935 GMT 18 Feb 91

[Text] Al-Ta'if, 18 Feb (WAKH)—Kuwaiti Air Force fighters strafed Iraqi artillery positions and armor battalions in the northwestern area of occupied Kuwait. Citing a Kuwaiti military source, KUNA said that 15 fighter planes strafed the Iraqi concentration this morning and that all planes returned safely to base.

Meanwhile, 12 Kuwaiti planes strafed Iraqi armor and tank battalions in southern Kuwait this evening. The source said that all planes returned safely to base after scoring direct hits on the aggressor.

500 Iraqis Surrender in Battle With U.S. Forces

LD2002161491 London KUNA in Arabic 1538 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Formerly Kuwait KUNA]

[Text] Riyadh, 20 Feb, (KUNA)—U.S. forces took up advanced positions on Kuwaiti territory after a fierce battle during which 500 Iraqi soldiers surrendered, and a fortified Iraqi bunker was destroyed.

Official Reports on Action Against Oil Spill

LD1902145191 Riyadh SPA in English 1222 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Riyadh, Feb 19, SPA—President of the Royal Commission for Jubayl and Yanbu ruled out the possibility of industrial accidents as a result of military operations launched by the coalition forces for liberating Kuwait. Prince 'Abdallah Bin-Faysal Bin-Turqi said Saddam Husayn failed to pentrate the kingdom's air defences he resorted to attacks on major cities with Scud missiles.

Prince 'Abdallah, speaking to reporters during a luncheon he hosted here yesterday in honor of Saudi friendship delegations which visited a number of Islamic, Arab and friendly countries, said the commission has taken great precautions for averting any industrial accidents. Asked whether the current oil spill in the Gulf will affect the Kingdom's industrial installations, the commission's president said measures have been taken to protect these installations.

'We should not underestimate the hazard of this spill because its threat to installations will continue for months and to marine life for years,' Prince 'Abdallah added. Prince 'Abdallah highlighted the methods which have been adopted for combating the spill when it reaches the vital industrial installations.

He said the commission has rallied the assistance and know-how of international experts for fighting the spill which will affect all Arab Gulf and countries over looking the Arabian Gulf.

On the other hand, efforts are on full swing to rescue birds and marine life which is facing the danger of the spill which was caused by the dumping of millions of barrels of crude oil into the Arabian Gulf waters by the Iraqi aggressor.

The commission, in collaboration with Saudi ARAMCO [Arabian-American Oil Company], marine life rescue scheme in Jubayl and volunteers are making unceasing efforts to rescue birds, sea turtles and other endangered species which have been affected by the spill.

Minister Meets Egyptian, Pakistani Generals

LD2002142791 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the second deputy prime minister and minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, received at his office this morning, His Excellency General Yusuf Sabri Abu-Talib, the commander general of the Armed Forces and minister of defense and war production in fraternal Egypt, who is now on a visit to the Kingdom. Discussions covered matters of common interest and the developments in the region.

The meeting was attended by 'Uthman al-Humayd, the assistant minister of defense and aviation for military affairs, and members of the delegation accompanying the minister.

General Abu-Talib arrived last night in the Saudi Arabian Kingdom where he paid an inspection visit to the Egyptian forces operating within the joint forces. 'Uthman al-Humayd and senior officials welcomed Abu-Talib on his arrival in Riyadh.

His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz received at his office this afternoon, Staff General Mirza Mohammad Aslam, the chief of staff of the Pakistani Army, and members of this delegation. Cordial discussions and a review of matters of common interest took place.

The chief of staff of the Pakistani Army and members of his delegation arrived in Riyadh earlier today. They were welcomed on arrival by Staff Lieutenant General Yusuf Bin-'Abd-al-Rahman al-Rashid, the commander of the Saudi land forces; Mohammad Waliullah Khan Khaishagi, Pakistani ambassador to the Kingdom; and senior Armed Forces officers.

Papers Comment on Iraqi Plan, 'Aziz Moscow Visit

LD1602182191 Riyadh SPA in English 1240 GMT 16 Feb 91

[Text] Riyadh, Feb. 16, SPA—A Saudi English newspaper today said inteview of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Minister and acting Planning Minister Hisham Nazir with the Cable News Network comprised a frank and forthright assessment of the energy situation in the wake of the current Gulf crisis.

'In the bargain, he has made it very clear that Saudi Arabia has not furthered any selfish ends and has not reaped a windfall as a result of the spiralling oil prices after the August 2 invasion of Kuwait,' RIYADH DAILY said.

Doubtlessly, ever since August 2, the newspaper said the Kingdom has made great sacrifices. 'It will continue to do so, irrespective of the costs, until Kuwait is liberated.

'All nations directly participating in the Gulf war and others indirectly backing the multinational efforts can rest assured that Saudi Arabia is willing to do everything for them for the sacrifices they have made,' RIYADH DAILY said.

Under the title, 'Saddam's Cruel Hoax,' ARAB NEWS said Iraq's offer to withdraw from Kuwait contains too many preconditions to be acceptable. 'U.N. Resolution 660, which it says it is willing to abide by, is quite specific: Withdrawal from Kuwait must be complete and unconditional. That remains the unalterable demand of the international community and, more particularly, of the coalition forces now fighting to achieve it,' it added.

There is nothing new about Saddam's offer. Baghdad was making the same sort of noises back in August, offering to withdraw in return for linkage. It was unacceptable then and it is unacceptable now. If anything, Iraq's conditions are even more outrageous than they were before, ARAB NEWS said.

'The way the offer has been couched cannot but lead people to ask whether this is a serious attempt at peace or just a public relations ploy aimed at delaying the liberation of Kuwait. In view of Saddam's past performance, it is very difficult to believe it is the former and very easy to believe the latter. It is not just the coalition partners who are skeptical. Even the Soviets, who are trying their hardest to achieve a diplomatic breakthrough, are wary,' it added.

'Whichever way, it points to one thing—that the military campaign against Saddam's forces is having its desired effect. He clearly fears the imminent ground attack. That conclusion has to be drawn from the timing of this offer,' the newspaper said.

The Arabic language newspaper AL-YAWM, published in Dammam, today described the Iraqi offer as a 'hopeless Saddam manoeuvre to avoid impending defeat.'

'Saddam Husayn's conditional bid to quit Kuwait was merely another fresh manoeuvre which quite clearly showed up the sorry state of Iraq's leadership, both politically and militarily,' it said.

'Indeed the Iraqi regime is now almost completely estranged from the Iraqi people after the continuous military pounding by the joint forces. A heavy pounding that has forced Saddam to confine himself continuously to his underground bunker with some members of his family and retainers, many of whom have fled abroad leaving the poor Iraqi people to bear the brunt of the Arab Gulf war.

The upshoot of all this is that the Iraqi man-in-the-street is now openly critical of his fallen idol whose impossible demands to effect a military withdrawal from Kuwait have made it futile to comply with the conditions imposed by the international community in this respect.

On the military side, Saddam's latest gambit to escape defeat has proved quite useless—given the rapidly deteriorating condition of his armed forces which the joint forces have reduced to a mere shadow of its former combat preparedness and logistic ability.

It is quite obvious that Saddam's latest offer (ludicrous as it is) is meant as an obvious face-saver for him—if he can manage it. Indeed such a preposterous tour de force shows quite clearly that Saddam in his hard-headedness has cast aside Iraqi aspirations and took himself (and them) towards certain rack and ruin. This tragedy could have been avoided by the simple expedient of an unconditional withdrawal earlier on,' AL-YAWM said.

For its part, another Arabic daily, AL-JAZIRAH, published in Riyadh, said Saddam's offer is a decision taken too late.

'The action taken by Saddam Husayn yesterday in coming around U.N. Security Council Resolution 660, should have been realised six months gao, sparing him and his nation a great deal of human sufferings, material losses and personal heartaches as well.

Indeed, Saddam's mention of withdrawal has come much too late. It has come when his armed forces are at the end of their tether. It has come as a direct result of his intransigence and his pitiable failure to understand the true resolve and insistence of international consensus. And, finally, it has come as a result of the poisoned chalice which Saddam (In his abysmal ignorance) proferred to others, and which now he is obliged to drink to the dregs.

Sadly enough, Saddam has once more misinterpreted international opinion by trying forlornly to introduce a number of conditions as face savers which he has fervently desired for all along. Here too, pathetically enough, he is bound to fail. Clearly, he will have, nolens and volens (willing or unwilling), to bow down to the sovereign will of the international community which he has so often foolishly flouted as have so many other dictators cast in the same unfortunate mould,' Al-JAZIRAH said.

Peace Decision Up to Saddam

LD1802074191 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 0050 GMT 18 Feb 91

[From the Press Review]

[Text] In its first edition, AL-RIYADH writes: The Soviet Union, before the arrival of Tariq Hanna ['Aziz] in Moscow, said that it supports the international unanimity and the Security Council resolutions. By this the Soviet Union is guaranteeing that it will not be outside this understanding, and thus the Iraqi foreign minister should understand in advance that what he wants to say and the initiative proposed last Friday will remain texts that are acceptable and agreeable only to Iraq.

The Soviet Union, which is the Iraqi minister's second port of call after Iran, can no longer be hoodwinked by empty slogans and phrases because it wants to realize progress in more balanced relations with the advanced countries, away from cold and hot wars. Iraq will not be the alternative and important country as far as the Soviet interests with Europe, America, and Japan are concerned.

The visit of Tariq Hanna—unless he provides a clear explanation of his country's positions and readiness to accept the international resolutions—will change nothing concerning the progress of the war, the war which we know Iraq will neither win nor determine the course of in its own interest. If the aims are clear regarding stopping the war, one would suppose that the Iraqi leadership would realize that peaceful results cannot be determined except by war when there is a position such as that adopted by Iraq. Perhaps asking the Soviet Union to mediate in a hot and destructive issue such as this requires Iraq to provide the Soviets with whatever they can give to the states which have entered the war and which still regard their victory inevitable.

The basis of dialogue is clear enough; without a declaration of unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait as a first step, amendment of the international resolutions will remain impossible, including the supporting of the tendency adopted by the Soviet Union if one supposes that the Soviet Union will undertake the task of mediation as a path for peace. The war was started by an individual decision made by and insisted on by Saddam. In the same manner, he himself should make the opposite decision if he wants peace to become a position on which there is no contradiction with the states of the world. If one opens the file of the crisis since last August, however, one would not find in Iraq's excuses a serious attitude. This is because prevarications, as a method in administering the crisis, have resulted in a lack of confidence and the demand for a written guarantee has become the only route that can possibly be pursued.

We do not believe that Saddam does not know how the international will can be realized, and the objections to the manupilation of this will. The adversaries standing against him are powerful in all military efficiency and financial capability standards. They have on their side the procedural texts which approved the principle of political and military punishment. Therefore, there is no use in searching for outlets outside what the international resolutions have stated. To keep Iraq united and a member of the international family observing the logic of current relations, it is inevitable to reaffirm confidence in its behavior and work to close the open loopholes with logical things that are understandable by world public opinion.

Iraq did not need to detonate the war which has destroyed everything and made many countries double their expenditure. But because the subsequent outcome will be as difficult as the war, Iraq is more in need than anyone to put its house in order because the towns which have become ruins and the general feelings of Iraqis that they reject the principle being involved in aimless wars, add to that the value of political and security stability, are the factors which are supposed to motivate peace among the Iraqis more than other peoples. Acceptance of something which the international resolutions do not contain is rejected with the force of the law and the might of the international will which will never be shaken.

Text of Resolution 660 Stressed

LD1802101491 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 0050 GMT 18 Feb 91

[From the Press Review]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] AL-YAWM writes: The wording of UN Security Council Resolution No. 660 is frank and categorical in its four clauses. The Iraqi regime is trying to distort this, alleging that it was approved with

conditions similar to previous and well-known conditions. The four clauses are well-known to all those who have been following the invasion operation right from the beginning until now.

The first concerns UN condemnation of the Iraqi invasion of the State of Kuwait. The second demands Iraq's unconditional withdrawal of its forces from all Kuwaiti positions occupied on 2 August 1990. The third calls on Iraq and Kuwait to begin negotiations to settle the pending disputes between them. The fourth concern reconvening the Security Council as required to debate further steps to ensure the implementation of this resolution.

These are clear clauses unrelated to this or that restriction or condition which the Iraqi regime submitted to implement this UN resolution. This matter makes one think that withdrawal from Kuwait—which the Iraqi president announced—is a propaganda lie he is using to realize the maximum political gains possible for his doomed leadership and ultimately to extend the duration of the war. The international community does not agree with this shaky and self-defeating announcement, because it does not correspond to the wording of the resolution, on the one hand, and because it is linked to the Iraqi president's conditions and restrictions on the other. It is regarded as contempt for the resolutions, the Security Council adopted. [passage omitted]

Turkish Minister Meets Fahd, Requests More Aid

NC2002143291 Istanbul HURRIYET in Turkish 16 Feb 91 p 15

[Fatih Cekirge report: "We Asked King Fahd To Extend Additional Aid to Turkey"]

[Excerpts] Saudi Arabia, (HURRIYET)—Foreign Minister Kurtcebe Alptemocin heard about Iraq's disclosure that it is prepared to withdraw from Kuwait in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions when he arrived in Saudi Arabia yesterday. [passage omitted]

Alptemocin discussed three important matters with King Fahd:
1. Alptemocin hinted that Turkey expects Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to provide aid to Turkey—that is, in addition to the $1.2 billion worth of oil the latter has given in the form of a grant to help it redeem the loss it has suffered as a result of the Gulf war.

2. Alptemocin discussed the problem of the Turkish workers who submitted their passports to their Saudi Arabian sponsors in accordance with the current system in Saudi Arabia. Alptemocin explained that the Turkish workers are now unable to acquire exit visas to leave Saudi Arabia because their passports are with their sponsors, who have left the country. Furthermore, Alptemocin asked King Fahd to resolve the problems of the Turkish workers who wish to return to Turkey.

3. Alptemocin tried to ascertain Saudi Arabia's view on the security system that is contemplated for the region after the war. A number of arrangements were discussed in that regard, including the possibility of Israel's participation in a security system which calls for arms reductions in the participating countries. It is feared that the exclusion of Israel may encourage the countries concerned to continue to maintain an excessive amount of arms.

Meanwhile, the Turkish ambassadors in the Middle East countries met in Riyadh to assess the developments in the Gulf war. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Presidential Council Discusses Iraq, Approves Budgets

EA1902102191 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 18 Feb 91

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, chaired the Presidential Council's regular meeting today. During the meeting, the Council discussed items on its agenda and developments affecting the region. The Council considered the Presidential Council chaiman's intensive contacts with his brothers Jordanian King Husayn Bin-Talal, Morrocan King Hassan II, Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, Djibouti President Hassan Gouled Aptidon, and Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak. All these contacts centered on the need to halt the savage aggression against the fraternal Iraqi people, the importance of developing the Iraqi initiative, and the importance of creating Arab and international [word indistinct] to implement it.

The Council also discussed visits by delegations from France, Iraq, Iran, and the Soviet Union to the capital, Sanaa, the results of these visits, and their talks with the brother chairman of the Presidential Council. During the meeting, the Council also approved the state's general budget and the economic sector's draft budget presented by the Council of Representatives and sent the budgets to the government for action as directed by the Public Planning Directorate.

Foreign Minister Reviews Country's Gulf Policy

PM2002160091 Paris LE MONDE in French 20 Feb 91 p 6

[Report by Jean Gueyras: "Yemen Admits Iraq's Wrongs But Protests U.S. 'Intransigence'"]

[Text] Sanaa—Yemen gave an enthusiastic welcome to last week's Iraqi peace initiative and, without waiting for the Soviet-Iraqi talks in Moscow, 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, its president, telephoned several heads of fraternal Arab states, even Presidents Mubarak and al-Asad, to ask them to shoulder their responsibilities in "this critical

phase of Arab history" and to exercise their influence to "safeguard peace in the Gulf" and "to end the aggression against fraternal Iraq."

The radio and television are devoting a large proportion of their news reports to this "historic event" and the newspaper editorialists criticize those who, by rejecting Baghdad's proposals, are showing that they want to continue the war "to destroy Iraq and impose U.S. hegemony in the Gulf."

Receiving us in his office at the Foreign Ministry, Sanaa Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani said immediately that, although "Iraq has always been prepared to negotiate its withdrawal from Kuwait," "it has never said that it was prepared to do so unconditionally." Mr. al-Iryani, who is very close to President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, being one of his closest advisers, has never ignored the fact that the occupation of Kuwait is at the root of the present crisis. "Yemen," he stressed, "condemned the occupation of Kuwait and the use of force to settle border disputes right from the start." But, he added, before the crisis broke out on 2 August, "we had great sympathy for Baghdad's argument—which the Kuwaitis refused to understand—that an outlet to international waters, in addition to the Shatt-al-Arab, is vital for Iraq's survival."

According to well-informed circles in Sanaa, during a visit to Baghdad, Mr. al-Iryani pressed President Saddam Husayn to agree to withdraw from the emirate to make possible a peaceful resolution of the crisis. In this connection, the Yemeni foreign minister recalled that his country voted in favor of the Security Council resolution condemning Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. With regard to the latest Iraqi peace proposal, he repeated several times: "Demanding Iraq's unconditional surrender without the problems which led to the occupation of the emirate being solved at the same time, will only have one result: the continuation of the war." In Mr. al-Iryani's view, Iraq does not intend to capitulate but simply wants to negotiate. And Saddam Husayn's recent initiative defines the "Iraqi conditions for such negotiations."

The answer given by the U.S. and its allies, he said, has always been: "Surrender unconditionally or it is war. That is the only choice Iraq has so far been given." In reality, he added, "The U.S. and its allies want the destruction of the Iraqi Army. The rejection of Baghdad's peace initiative can therefore only be explained by the fact that this objective has not yet been attained."

Having said that, Mr. al-Iryani stressed that, despite the fact that Yemen's policy is not aligned with Iraq ("We have not violated any of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations"), his country is suffering badly from this crisis ("we are being punished for adopting an independent political stance since the start of the crisis"). He attacked the Western press, notably the U.S. press, which he accused of being transformed into a press "worthy of Third World countries," in other words obeying the directives of a single center, deliberately ignoring Yemen's "neutral position," and talking of a "Baghdad-Sanaa axis." "I repeat: We have not concluded any military or other alliance with Iraq, before or after the start of the crisis. It is true that we have friendly relations with Baghdad, but we have such relations with other countries. We are prepared to extend this friendship to all those prepared to accept it," he said.

"Yemen's misfortune," a reliable observer said, "is that it was a member of the Security Council when the crisis broke out. The fervor shown by Yemen's representative Mr. Ashtal in defending a peaceful solution to the conflict from the UN platform, was interpreted as alignment with Iraq's ideas." In this connection, others talk of "benevolent neutrality" which seems consistent with the truth. Moreover, in many respects, Sanaa's situation is reminiscent of that which prevails in Amman, with almost daily demonstrations in favor of Iraq, controlled to varying degrees by the authorities.

In Sanaa, however, some weariness is beginning to appear within the population. Moreover, the population shows no hostility toward the few foreigners remaining in Yemen, which is far from being the case in Jordan.

Yemen's friendly relations with Baghdad, Mr. al-Iryani explained, do not date from the current conflict, but go back to the early 1940's. Relations between the two countries, he added, have since been excellent, and reached their peak during the Iran-Iraq war when, before unification, North Yemen was the only Arab country to participate in the war against Iran, sending a brigade of 1,500 soldiers to the front. "This symbolic brigade," he stressed, "was relieved every three months, which means that almost 30,000 North Yemen soldiers took part in the first Gulf war, alongside Iraq."

The former South Yemen had a more guarded attitude toward Iraq, but now that unity has become an irreversible fact, nine months after the Aden agreement making Yemen a single state, there are no longer any discordant voices. Moreover, after unity, Iraq did a great deal to facilitate the establishment of united institutions in the new state, the obvious aim being to enable it to oppose the maneuvers of Saudi Arabia which did not relish the creation of a state with 12 million inhabitants on its southern border.

For most Yemenis, Saudi Arabia is the main enemy of the new unified state. As a good diplomat, however, Mr. al-Iryani avoided specifically criticizing the Wahabite monarchy but could not help mentioning the plight of a million Yemeni citizens hounded out of Saudi Arabia by intimidation measures aimed at destabilizing the new unified republic by exacerbating its economic problems. "Yemen," he said, "has never undermined the military, political, and economic interests of the countries in the anti-Iraqi alliance. However, it is regrettable to see that some of them have inflicted serious economic losses on Yemen, which will take many long years to remedy." This is a reference to the "economic war" launched by

Riyadh, the United States, and some Western countries against Yemen. Although the latter is respecting the embargo imposed by the United States on its "Iraqi friend," it is being subjected to a veiled embargo whose unavowed aim is to bring it back to a better frame of mind.

Mr. al-Iryani attacked the Saudi press which, he said, is writing columns about a "Jordanian-Iraqi-Yemeni conspiracy," aimed at "carving up" Saudi Arabia, which is "one way of justifying the wrongs they have done us." Moreover, he added, "the clearer it becomes to the whole world that these accusations are unfounded, the fiercer the Saudi newspapers become in their attacks."

The general view is that this systematic campaign of denigration by Saudi Arabia and the expulsion of a million Yemeni workers have had the opposite effect and have considerably weakened and discredited the pro-Saudi political and military lobby which, for many years, was influential in northern Yemen.

Popular Demonstrations Support Iraqi Initiative

'Mass Procession' in Say'un

EA1702212891 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 17 Feb 91

[Text] This morning there was a mass procession in support of the fraternal Iraqi people in Say'un town, Hadramawt Governorate. The demonstrators expressed their condemnation of the American-Zionist aggression and of the [words indistinct] the city of Baghdad, in which hundreds of the steadfast Iraqi people were martyred. The Revolutionary Palace Square in Say'un Governorate [as heard] also witnessed a mass rally expressing condemnation of the vile crimes and barbarous acts being perpetrated by international Zionism against the fraternal Iraqi people. The rally expressed support for the Iraqi initiative calling for peace as announced by Iraq on 15 February with a view to bringing about a just and lasting peace in the region.

Procession Reported in Aden

EA1902105591 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 18 Feb 91

[Text] Demonstrations supporting our steadfast Arab people in Iraq continue in all governorates of Yemen. This morning in the commercial and economic capital, Aden, there was a mass solidarity procession which started at Exhibition Hall in Khormaksar and proceeded toward the UN Permanent Representative Office in Aden. The Popular Committee for the Defense of Iraq organized this procession. The participants delivered a statement on their behalf and a letter to UN Secretary General Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar.

[Words indistinct] the UN representative the condemnation of our Yemeni masses of the barbarous acts of aggression being perpetrated by the United States and the alliance against fraternal Iraq, as well as their intentions to annihilate the people and destroy their scientific, economic, and historical achievements. The letter appealed to the secretary general for the sake of peace and justice to stop strikes against residential areas, scientific establishments, places of worship, and kindergartens and to stop the massacres of the Iraqi sons being perpetrated by the United States and its allies.

Earlier, Brother Salih Sha'i, member of the Council of Representatives, delivered an address in which he praised the steadfastness of fraternal Iraq in the face of the aggressive U.S.-led allied forces. Iraq is waging a battle of Arab honor and nobility in defending its history and its people's existence. He said the real U.S. aims included destroying Iraq's resources and potentials and extending hegemony over Arab resources and potentials.

Among the participants in the procession were brother Sa'id Salih Salim, member of the Council of Representatives of Aden Governorate, and a number of representatives of parties, mass organizations, women's organizations, and a huge crowd of citizens.

Rally Condemns U.S. Actions

EA2002175091 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Yesterday a rally was held in Daw an Province, Hadramawt Governorate, in solidarity with the fraternal Iraqi people. A number of speeches were delivered at the rally, which was attended by a large number of people, condemning the barbarous actions of the aircraft of the American-Zionist aggressors against the innocent people of fraternal Iraq. The speeches confirmed the premeditated intentions of the United States and its allies, who want to obliterate the Iraqi people and destroy Iraq's economic and military installations.

Habash Explains 'Vision' of Iraqi Victory

EA2002185891 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Feb 91

[From the "Direct Newscast" program]

[Text] The newspaper AL-'ARABI 10 UKTUBAR [newspaper name as heard] has interviewed brother Dr. George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, while he was in Sanaa to attend the pan-Arab popular conference on the defense of Iraq and the Arab nation. The interview was published in the newspaper's issue of Tuesday, 19 February.

Brother George Habash referred to the important issues affecting the Gulf situation in light of the onslaught against Iraq by American and allied forces. He explained the plans that the United States and its allies are preparing to implement in the region. He said: The hostile camp thinks it will win the battle, thus enabling it to put in place the security, political, and economic order it wants and which would serve the interests of America, the imperialist camp as a whole, and the Zionist entity.

He said his vision of victory in this battle does not require that Iraq inflict a military defeat on the United States and all the forces of the hostile alliance, but rather relies on Iraq's steadfastness and the generation of a huge mass reaction in the Arab homeland, the Islamic world, European public opinion, and in America itself. This reaction will call on the hostile alliance to halt this aggression and compel it seriously to consider a political solution to all the crises of the region. On the basis of this vision, a case should emerge for the existence of a Palestinian state. This is the area in which Iraq and the Arab states siding with it in the battle can influence the creation of a new Arab situation.

George Habash said: In contemplating the establishment of a new order in the region, the American administration not only envisions the partition and division of Iraq and the liquidation of the Palestinian cause by giving the Palestinians autonomy, but also (?the obliteration) of the PLO and a project to establish a greater Israel.

Referring to Iraq's linkage of the Gulf crisis with the Palestinian issue, he pointed out that Iraq's linkage of the two issues was hitting a collection of birds with a single stone in that, by this initiative, Iraq has disgraced the American administration in terms of its adherence to international legality. He said that after the occupation of Kuwait, the United States became extremely anxious: Up to that moment, it had never risen in defense of Security Council and UN resolutions, not until Iraq took the initiative and disgraced its alleged eagerness. This initiative has created a great ambiguity for the American administration. The Iraqi initiative also brought the Palestinian issue into the limelight.

George Habash pointed to the manifestations of mass rejection of the American aggression against Iraq. He stressed the need for sustained mass pressure and the direction of its aims in the Arab and Western spheres until it is able to achieve its aims. He expressed the hope that this aggressive war, the changes it brings, and the causes in the Arab arena would serve as appropriate circumstances for creating the required changes in the structure of the Arab national liberation movement and help it overcome this crisis.

Saddam Addresses Nation on Initiative 21 Feb

NC2102164091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Feb 91

["Full recording" of address by President Saddam Husayn on 21 February—place not given]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Which, then, is the best? He that layeth his foundation on piety to God and His good pleasure? Or he that layeth his foundation on an undermined cliff of sand, ready to crumble to pieces? And it doth crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of hell. And God guideth not people that do wrong. The foundation of those who so build is never free from suspicion and shakiness in their hearts, until their hearts are cut to pieces. And God is all-knowing, wise. [Koranic verses]

O great people; O stalwart men in our valiant Armed Forces; O faithful, honest Muslims, wherever you may be; O people wherever faith in God has found its way to your hearts, and wherever it found what embodies it in the sincerity of your intentions and deeds; O lovers of humanity, virtue, and fairness, who reject aggressiveness, injustice, and unfairness: In difficult circumstances and their events, some people—more often than not—lose the connection with the beginning and preoccupy themselves with the results, or forget, when there are resemblances, the connection between any result and the reasons that gave rise to those events, and on whose basis those results were based. Furthermore, in difficult circumstances, which difficulty is hard to describe, the mind and consciousness are generally preoccupied with what influences the life of the individual concerned with that circumstance. Thus, he bases his opinion and position on it without connecting every individual case with what is collective. The future is even absent at times or is not given very great importance as an indispensable weight for assessing the (?influence) of each case, regardless of whether the case or individual item being assessed is connected to the past and present or to the reasons and beginnings, or whether it is part of the results; and regardless of whether it was part of the simple results and individual items, with limited effect, or of the major results that have a comprehensive effect that go beyond the individual, a number of individuals, or only a specific sector in the society, to the society as a whole and where it goes beyond the transient and quick moving present to the future as a whole. [sentence as heard]

Some have either completely forgotten these influential facts in the life of man, whether in this or that direction, or the presence of these facts in their minds has become weak. Many facts between causes and effects or between the prelude to and the results of the circumstances and events that preceded 2 August and what took place on 2 August and afterward have been missed.

This description was in most cases applicable to some Arabs and to many foreigners, so that some of them could not remember what Zionism and U.S. imperialism have done against Iraq, beginning with the Irangate plot or the Iran-contra scandal in 1986 until the first months of 1990, when the plot against Iraq reached its dangerous phases, as U.S. and Western media began to prepare for the Israeli aggression against us, which we confronted in the statement of 8 April 1990; when the Americans cut off bread from Iraq and canceled the grain deal concluded with U.S. companies in the third month of the same year, that is 1990; and when they raised the slogan of an economic, technologic, and scientific boycott of Iraq and worked to make Europe and Japan do the same.

We know that recalling the preludes and causes leading up to the results and recalling the grounds for an event or events in a permanent manner and in all (?cases) is not an easy undertaking. This is because doing so requires a high degree of awareness, or because this requires a vital connection between those recalling the backgrounds and preludes to these events, and the kind of immediate and long-term suffering produced by their causes and effects.

Those whom we describe as forgetful or as unaware of the connection between a given cause and a given effect do not all enjoy the same degree of awareness that provides the elements of [word indistinct] what is required. Most of them have not suffered the causes and effects of the circumstances, especially in the world arena. Therefore, we have faced serious difficulties in making them understand that what happened on 2 August, despite the clarity of the entirely just historic dimension, is basically not a cause within the course of the conflict between Iraq—as a bastion of faith and honorable aspiration—and Zionism and U.S. imperialism. The events of that day are one aspect of the results of the battle or the conflict that preceded 2 August. The measure taken on the glorious day of the call is a means of self-defense, and one aimed at defending all honorable principles and values of Iraq. Although [words indistinct] an offensive form, an account of the events of this day should not be taken out from the general context of developments. A correct account of this requires that it be placed within its comprehensive framework.

The failure of some world circles, especially among politicians who are (?outspoken) against the Arabs [word indistinct], to understand has been boosted by the fact that—regardless of the details—the objective of these circles is to harm Iraq's accomplishments.

Some tyrannical Arab rulers, who betrayed the nation's principles and aspirations of their peoples, cooperated with and stooped to this tendency. They accepted degradation and humiliation, even inside the palaces and seats of their rule. They chose the path of obeying the tendentious foreigner and his evil, hostile intentions.

This flood of media campaigns officially conducted against us by 30 countries further complicated the prospect of establishing a link between causes and effects and between what happened to the Arabs and to the Iraqis prior to 2 August, what happened on the day of the call to glory, and what happened after 2 August. All the

accumulated extensions and influences of these countries accompany these campaigns, and are affected by them. Nevertheless, the noble person has remained noble and is guided by the facts—not merely by what he sees and hears, but along the path where his heart, his faithful empathy with jihad, and his destiny with the Iraqi stance lead him. This is the stance of the people in this nation. What has guided them in this direction has been their long suffering at the hands of the ranks of injustice, the unjust, and the Arab rulers who are their allies and who betrayed the nation and sold out honor and religion to the foreigner. Some of those rulers chose this course as an indispensable path to assuming their places on the seat of power and undeservedly impose themselves on their people. It was the down payment for their agentry. Other rulers stooped to this after they discovered, taking into account the nature of rule they have chosen, that there was no other way to keep the seat of power except to comply with the will of the U.S. intelligence services. This applies without exception to the Arab rulers who are siding with the United States today and supplying its aggression under the Arab cover and with funds it needs, and with the false and fraudulent talk of Arab ability. Evil is what they are doing.

Traitor Fahd, the betrayer of the two mosques, and light-headed Husni, the ruler with which noble Arab Egypt has been afflicted, stand at the head of the list. Faced with this state of affairs, we found that the enemy media and the enemy policy dropped a heavy screen on every event, stand, or cause that preceded 2 August 1990 that could shed some light on these incidents and explain their true nature. Palestine, whose just cause dates back more than 40 years, as well as its future and the positions on it, has been one of the most important pillars of the conspiracy in which the oil rulers have participated as conspirators against Iraq, led by the agent shaykhs of Kuwait and the Saudi rulers. Biased people have even tried to neglect the fate of Palestine as being one of the causes of these events. The tendentious media, which have widespread influence and impact, and the suspect politicians and those who seek personal objectives—backed by Zionism everywhere—began to focus on the 2 August events to depict them as having taken place without any basis or background and as though our attention were being devoted only to these events. They even issued orders to silence voices and prevent them from mentioning any historical background that would explain to the foreigner or the Arab what he does not know about the reality of the relationship that exists between Kuwait and Iraq, and that Kuwait is part of Iraq, but was severed following the partitioning conspiracy to weaken the Arab nation, harm its status and role, and weaken every Arab country that has some kind of leverage.

In view of this deluge of the falsification of facts, and because of this large number of countries participating in the aggression—or those who have been confused about the real reasons for the results—it is insufficient to respond and clarify through media and political statements alone, in view of our modest influence. Measures and actions are inevitable to place the innocent, who do not know the (?aspect of links), before a rational debate that bypasses the smokescreens and misinformation launched by hostile information media. Something must be done to place the enemies in an embarrassing situation or in an impasse—something that will drive them to behavior and positions that will make those who have been anesthetized by hostile media wake up to new facts or new (?opportunities) that will reveal to them the facts, free from covers, so that they can appear as they are: crystal clear. Thus came the 15 February initiative, which the Revolution Command Council statement fired at the enemy goal—to use the terms of sports and athletics—so as to shake the nets of the enemy court. Either an acceptance that pleases friends or rejection that annoys the enemies. This may divide the enemy ranks, which are founded on rancor and rallied around wrong. Certain people who have been misled will discover what will help them realize that what has happened, and the root of what has happened, was not caused by 2 August and what followed. What preceded 2 August does not go back to 1990, its events, and circumstances alone, but goes back to every iota of dignity and pride, faith and tenacity toward right, rejection of wrong, and hostility to criminal usurper Zionism, support for the poor, and the fight against injustice and corruption. These stands are the qualities of Iraqis or what has been revived in them by the revolutionary leadership.

The rancor against Iraq has been created over time, with every aspect of capability added to Iraq or created to become a serious pillar of its characteristics and potential; with steadfastness in the face of the aggression exposing the weakness of some of the Arabs vis-a-vis the aggression of Zionism and the ambitions of the Americans; with every book that has been written with sweat in support of the blood of struggle; with every effort and every stage of building in Iraq's lofty edifice; with every floor in the building of its new civilization or wheel in every factory or plant which has been built as a symbol of loftiness and as an introduction to a new, happy, and prosperous life under firm faith in God, the homeland, and the nation; and with the slogan: The poor have a right in the wealth of the rich, because they are members of the same people or members of the same nation, and all of them are the sons of Adam and Eve.

To those who ask about the rancor of Husni and others like him toward the leadership and people of Iraq, and to those who were alarmed by this rancor harbored by those who ate and drank under Iraqi hospitality and were given attention which they do not deserve: We say that we do not regret the hospitality and good intentions accorded by us or the people of Iraq toward people whom we wanted, at the time, to be brothers of the Iraqis, when they stood in the ranks of the faithful, with noble convictions, and honorable intentions. But since they have committed treason, no one will feel sorry for them. May God's curse be upon them until the day of judgment. We say that these misled people have derived their rancor against you, O Iraqis, and against your

leadership, from the attributes which you possess and which have characterized your leadership. These misled people have apparently found in every call for honor and purity of intention and in every call stating that the ruler or leader should be part of his people, an insult aimed against him personally by the people of Iraq and its leadership.

Each placard you raised when you went out to receive them, those who rejected the Zionist scheme and U.S. imperialism and denounced their agents, was viewed by them as a placard directed against them. Each word said about the importance of the fairness of the ruler or leader and about his lightweight guilt when the money he carries is lightweight, was considered a personal attack against them. Each denunciation of weakness, submissiveness, and the acceptance of humiliation was a insult to them.

Yes, noble mujahidin sons of Iraq: That group of Arabs, and maybe other rulers, and even some foreigners, have found that every positive feature in you and your structure reflects in a shining mirror their shortcomings and defects before the people and the nation. Each call for power, invincibility, faith, capability, nobility, pride, dignity, courage, liberation from the foreigner, abstinence, and the liberation of the soul from ill-gotten money; and each attempt to highlight the correct qualities of an official, in accordance with Arab and Muslim standards, was considered an instigation against them and a call to and indoctrination of their peoples to triumph over them.

It seems this is why some Arab rulers were filled with hatred against you. This, along with covetous designs, is also the reason that may fill some foreigners with hatred against you. But, brothers and sons, stalwart and honest men, and glorious women, what more can we do? Would anything other than this have left even a grain of honor, faith, glory, and pride; or would it have left a gift that we would take pride in and a future toward whose doors and shining promises we race?

Would any action to the contrary—in which we would follow the heels of the foreigner in the direction that he wants—leave a drop of honor for the men and free women? Would any such act leave faith and its rites anything but decaying bones and fine dust that meet no need? Is there (?anything) that our great Iraqi people and glorious nation takes pride in other than this course? We will all maintain our character and will demand anything else that will boost and entrench faith and cleanse souls to the satisfaction of [word indistinct] and the nation.

There is no other course than the one we have chosen, except the course of humiliation and darkness, after which there will be no bright sign in the sky or brilliant light on earth. We have chosen this course. The Iraqis have chosen this course in an era where many characteristics became manifest. They continue to ask and work for what will make them more brilliant, faithful, and lofty. There is no other course. We will protect it with our souls, funds, and hearts. We will proceed on this course, irrespective of the nature of the political efforts which we are exerting and whose formulation and directions Tariq 'Aziz carried to Moscow, and which, if rejected, will expose all the covers, and will only maintain the premeditated intentions of the aggression against us without any cover and without any slogans that will lead to intermingling [al-tadakhul].

After the 15 February initiative sprang from its sister initiative of 12 August 1990, what did Bush say, and what did his servant Fahd say? Bush rejected it and regarded it as a cruel hoax before he understood it. Fahd, who chews his words just as camels chew the grass of their pastures, became an eloquent orator to say the war against Iraq will continue until Iraq does this and that. Note, O observers; note, O people who have been distracted by the 2 August events from the real intentions of the aggression; note and examine that which you have overlooked. The Iraqis and good people became aware of it at an early date. Note how Bush and Fahd have designs regarding matters that were not included among their slogans, either before or after 2 August, and not until a short time ago. Note how they now have ambitions for greater things—light-headed Husni speaks in the same strain—to reveal their true intentions and not accept the 15 February initiative. Remember how in the period that preceded the announcement of the initiative, they and others in the West said that as soon as the word withdrawal is said, everything will be possible afterward. Note how they now have revealed their greed more clearly than they did, even in the moment preceding the announcement of the initiative. Note what their media are talking about now. These media are speaking about depriving Iraq of strength and capability and of the manifestations of progress, honor, and good example. They want to deprive Iraq of every quality characterizing truly faithful people and good sons who are faithful to their people, homeland, and nation. Shame on them, and shame on their cowardly act, and shame on all they do.

Note how those who, at one stage of the struggle, wanted to make the word withdrawal an introduction to undermining our Armed Forces' determination and resolve, and wanted to sow disarray in the ranks of our Armed Forces, are no longer interested in such a word now, or so they claim. They have started to neglect it and to talk about what is new, now that this has become a gratuitous gain, as they believe. They forgot that our people and Armed Forces—in addition to their evident great determination for jihad, which is a dowry to the wedding of jihad and sacrifice—are also fully aware that every step we make should be countered by what it deserves in terms of guarantees and by an action that keeps the future open before the Iraqis and the Arabs and all the faithful who reject injustice in the world, and that the word withdrawal has been placed by the Iraqis, the Arabs, and the good men of this world within this context and within the proper framework.

From this premise, and in the context of the comprehensive approach, it is the entire 15 February initiative, as a

new beginning, that will make the Iraqis more determined and more resolved if the initiative is rejected. Our Armed Forces will become more capable. This will result from the exposure of pretexts and disclosure of the true nature of the premeditated intentions. All this will make them more patient and steadfast and better prepared for the battle which God blesses and which good men support—after which there will be only a glorious conclusion, where a brilliant sun will clear the dust of battle, and where the clouds of battles will be dispelled to make room for a brilliant moon surrounded by a halo, whose size will be commensurate with the sacrifices that are required by the duties and conditions of victory, and by the patience that God Almighty expects from the people of jihad.

O brothers, O people: Note how those who feared a ground battle have now avoided the showdown for over a month. They have persisted further in killing civilians [word indistinct] and destroying property with their long-range aircraft and missiles with rancor that dwarfs that of Hulegu [grandson of Mongol ruler Genghis Khan]. They are doing this in an (?expression) to cover up their inability to confront our land forces in southern Iraq. Note how they, and certain people who do not know the Iraqis' faith and capability, now portray matters in a way as though the mere fact of not launching the land offensive is a gain to Iraq that the Iraqis should respond to with further concessions that would harm their principles, dignity, and rights as well as the Arab nation's rights and security. Notice how they are indulging in illusions. With any initiative, Iraq seeks to establish peace in the Gulf that will open the door to a comprehensive and equitable solution that achieves a real and permanent peace in the region in its entirety—foremost in Palestine. Iraq does not seek a temporary truce or capitulation which the failure and shameful want or have illusions about the possibility of achieving.

O fair people, note all this, as the Iraqis have noted, acknowledged, and concluded. Note all this so as to excuse the Iraqis from any subsequent action and to understand the justness of the Iraqi position. God is great, and mercy and immortality for our martyrs and our nation. Dignity, glory, and victory for the heroes of this path, the sons of our nation and mankind. God is great, God is great. Accursed be the lowly.

Saddam, RCC Meet To Discuss Soviet Plan 20 Feb

NC2002211791 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 2105 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn chaired a meeting of the Revolution Command Council [RCC]. The Council heard a report on the visit of Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, to the Soviet Union and Iran. The Council studied Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's proposals, which he asked the foreign minister to convey to the command. The Council decided to send Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, to Moscow soon to carry the command's reply to President Gorbachev's proposals. The meeting was attended by National Assembly Speaker Sa'di Mahdi Salih and Culture and Information Minister Latif Nusayif Jasim.

'Aziz Departs for Moscow 21 Feb

NC2102131191 Paris AFP in English 1303 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Baghdad, Feb 21 (AFP)—Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz left here Thursday for Tehran on his way to Moscow, where he is expected later in the day, Arab diplomatic sources reported.

Mr. 'Aziz is expected to deliver Baghdad's response to a Soviet initiative to end the Gulf war, which was presented to him in Moscow last Monday [18 February] by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Envoy in USSR Reviews Earlier Talks

NC1902143191 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Telephone interview with Ghafil Jasim Husayn, ambassador to the Soviet Union, by reporter Khalil al-Garyuti—recorded]

[Al-Garyuti] Your Excellency, at the conclusion of the Iraqi-Soviet talks, how would you assess their results?

[Husayn] The Iraqi Revolution Command Council [RCC] statement released on 15 February was discussed. The Soviet Union assessed it warmly and positively. The two parties exchanged views on establishing a just, honorable, and lasting peace in the Middle East and in the Arab Gulf region and on addressing all problems that the RCC statement diagnosed soundly and in a manner commensurate with the principles of international law and the UN Charter. The Soviet leadership put forward specific proposals which will be carefully studied by the Iraqi leadership.

[Al-Garyuti] Iraq yesterday received the Soviet peace plan in response to the Iraqi peace plan. In your view, what is the extent of agreement between the Soviet peace plan and the Iraqi overture?

[Husayn] Soviet President Gorbachev put forward a host of ideas and proposals to the Iraqi foreign minister, who will convey them to the Iraqi president and leadership. These ideas and proposals will be studied very carefully. It is well known that the Soviet Union approved all Security Council resolutions on the situation in the Gulf. However, the Soviet Union is seeking to resolve the resulting situation in the Gulf through political and diplomatic means. The Soviet Union positively assessed the RCC statement released on 15 February.

[Al-Garyuti] Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi, RCC member and Iraqi deputy prime minister, has left Moscow for Beijing. Can you give us an idea about his mission there?

[Husayn] Dr. Hammadi's visit to Beijing is part of a plan by the political leadership to contact certain countries with the aim of explaining the RCC statement released on 15 February in order to elicit the greatest international support possible for the Iraqi leadership's overture.

Communique Claims Four Planes Downed 21 Feb

NC2102102891 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 0858 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Communique No. 56 issued by the Armed Forces General Command—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Before all people of the world the U.S. Administration, its allies, the Zionists, and their agents have revealed that they are all advocates of war and rejectors of peace and that they want to occupy the lands of this nation, to reimpose enslavement on all its countries, to dominate the destiny of its sons, to erase the landmarks of its civilization, to control the oil resources, to steal and loot this wealth, and to manipulate the policies of the whole world through their control of the oil wells. Despite all their ridiculous fanfare and empty claims, it has been revealed that the most these cowards can do is to use the Air Force to strike the infrastructure of great Iraq and to attack its civilian population.

In contrast, the whole world has seen that Iraq is a sincere advocate of peace, that it wants security to prevail, and that it adheres to its freedom and the freedom of the Arabs and is determined to protect the nation's sources from robbery, to safeguard its holy places, to remove occupation from its land, and to preserve its wealth from the policy of robbery pursued by the Americans and their allies.

Let the whole world hear that in addition to these honorable principles and this firm faith in God, Iraq possesses armed forces which enjoy high morale, are highly motivated, and have many members. These forces possess every destructive weapon that is capable of dispersing the aggressors and inflicting defeat on them and making pay with the blood of their scoundrels as a consequence of their acts. These forces are capable of making defeat the outcome of these aggressors' acts and remarks.

Days will show them all that they hate. Shame and disgrace will befall the scabby agents, who have been inflated by hostile media, and whose imagination has led them to display empty cockiness.

The following is a roundup of our activities and the enemy's attacks during the past 24 hours:

1. Our heroic forces in the southern sector of operations directed a series of strong strikes with field and tactical missiles against the enemies' positions and their personnel assembly points in Saudi territory, inflicting on the aggressors substantial losses in personnel, equipment, weapons, and supplies.

2. The enemy continued its attacks on civilian areas and installations. Through 28 air sorties it targeted a number of culverts, bridges, farmers' villages, and citizens' houses. The enemy also carried out 322 air sorties against some military targets in the southern sector of operations.

3. With the bravery, determination, and perseverance of men, and with God's help, our valiant air and ground forces shot down four enemy planes, one of them an A-10. All praise from our people to the valiant men of our Armed Forces. God is with us. Go forward. [Signed] Armed Forces General Command

[Dated] 5 Sha'ban 1411 Hegira, corresponding to 21 February 1991

Jasim Reacts to French Minister's Statements

NC2102172191 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1250 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Baghdad, 21 Feb (INA)—Culture and Information Minister Latif Nusayyif Jasim has scoffed at statements made by French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas in which he threatened our valiant Armed Forces with an imminent ground offensive.

In a statement to INA today, Latif Nusayyif Jasim said: Since the start of the U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist aggression, Iraq has proven its legendary ability to stand fast despite the preparations for this aggression, including the material resources of 30 states.

The culture and information minister added that noble and proud Iraq, with all that God Almighty has bestowed upon it, will win a decisive victory, God willing, in spite of the huge number of air raids mounted by the enemies of God and mankind, raids that number in the tens of thousands. These raids failed to sap the morale of the Iraqis, or to affect their military capabilities as they stand fast, fortified by God's protection and ready to reply to any unjust aggression that the group of infidels and vice may launch.

Latif Nusayyif Jasim said: We tell Dumas and all those who (?try) to carry out military operations against Iraq that engaging the Iraqis in battle is not an easy matter, because this will be one of the greatest epics in history, and do not forget that the Iraqis' steadfastness has proved to be as ingrained as their civilization, which goes back more than 6,000 years. The Iraqis have also proven to people near and far that midgets like Dumas, Fahd, Husni, and the other U.S. lackeys have sustained the harshest of defeats, putting them in a dilemma that has made them commit atrocious crimes against defenseless civilians, and against cultural, religious sites, and other landmarks.

The culture and information minister added that the travesty of democracy and its false slogans, as well as

their claims about human rights and the new world order, have now been exposed. Iraq has removed all the masks that the rotten politicians were hiding behind.

The culture and information minister emphasized that the Arab dawn rising from Baghdad will illuminate the path to glory because the Iraqis are the true upholders of principles.

Concluding his statement to INA, Latif Nusayyif Jasim said that when strength is drawn forth and when faith becomes deeply entrenched in one's conscience, then God alone can control man's power.

Addressing Dumas, the culture and information minister said: You are the last one who should be talking about a ground war, or any other war, because you are a servile lackey of the Americans. Shut up, you and the likes of you. If you try your bad luck, the feet of the noble Iraqis will kick you into the dustbins of history. Victory will remain the lot of the Iraqis, thanks to the determination of President symbol Saddam Husayn and all the sons of Iraq and the Armed Forces who stand behind him, God willing.

Schwarzkopf Statements on Recent Raid Dismissed

NC2102093791 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 0904 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] A military spokesman has stated the following:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. News agencies have carried statements by the so-called General Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S.-Zionist forces in the peninsula and Gulf, in which he claimed that his forces and four planes raided our valiant forces and managed to capture hundreds of our troops.

While dismissing this report in part and parcel, we are suprised that such a statement is made by a general and that it contains information about things which only happen in American movies. This general affirms, praise be to God, that he knows nothing about the courage and resoluteness of the Iraqi soldier, but the coming days will teach him a lot.

If the American general has made this statement as part of psychlogical warfare, which has become the objective of the U.S. Administration, he has proven that both his ideas and intelligence are limited and that his general knowledge is muddy.

[Dated] 21 February

Saudi Pilots Reportedly Defect to Yemen

NC2002121091 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 0952 GMT 20 Feb 91

[From the "Mother of Battles—Reactions and View" program]

[Text] A number of the pilots from Najd and Hejaz [Saudi Arabia] have defected to the Republic of Yemen lately, with their military planes. According to well-informed sources in the Yemeni capital Sanaa, these planes have fled from the injustice and arbitrariness of the authorities of the traitor of the two holy mosques [King Fahd]. The sources say that the pilots who have flown their planes from bases in the south of the land of Najd and Hejaz are among the opponents of Al Sa'ud and that they reject the aggressive war waged by America and its allies against Iraq.

'Reliable Source' on Missile Damage in Israel

NC2002123191 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 0942 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Dispatch by unidentified correspondent in Cyprus]

[Text] I held a telephone conversation today with a reliable source inside occupied Palestine to find out the results of the Iraqi missile attack against a region in southern occupied Palestine Saturday night. The reliable source said the two Iraqi missiles managed to hit their targets accurately. The occupation authorities immediately surrounded the area and blocked roads leading to it, he said. The source inside occupied Palestine stressed that the area targeted by the Iraqi missiles contains the most important Israeli military bases and airports, including the nuclear reactors in Dimona and Nahal Soreq. The source noted that when the two missiles landed, electricity was completely cut off for some time, which means the blow was intense and extremely effective.

Another source in Tel Aviv with whom I spoke by telephone from Cyprus said the Zionist occupation authorities are greatly alarmed over how inhabitants are fleeing toward ports in long convoys. These authorities are now worried that the Jews may take ships to leave the land of Israel for good. They therefore gave ships strict orders to sail away from the ports so that they cannot be reached by those wishing to immigrate because they find life inside occupied Palestine hell.

A citizen from inside occupied Palestine also spoke with me by telephone about the three-day general strike that began on Saturday 16 February to mourn the loss of the virtuous al-'Amiriyah martyrs. He said the strike was observed throughout the occupied territories as an expression of outrage and anger at the heinous crime perpetrated by the forces of U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist aggression against inhabitants at the al-'Amiriyah shelter.

Meanwhile, I held a telephone conversation with informed sources in Saudi Arabia. They stressed that the city of Dhahran was the target of an Iraqi missile attack a few days ago. They said that an Iraqi missile hit the communications tower at the al-Dhahran military base.

Reportage on Allied Raids, Damage, Morale

AFP Reports on Infrastructure

NC1902133991 Paris AFP in English 1314 GMT 19 Feb 91

[By Bernard Estrade]

[Text] Amman, Feb 19 (AFP)—A month-long allied aerial assault on Iraq may have been furious and sometimes spectacular but its impact on the vaunted Iraqi war machine remains to be determined.

The attacks have not always spared the civilian population. Electricity and fresh water are in short supply and—for many inhabitants—a working telephone is a distant memory.

Traffic continues to flow both north and south and the trains, often hauling military equipment, are still running. There is no firm evidence that the army has been decimated.

A foreign journalist recently in Iraq, while unable to move around without escorts from the information ministry, nonetheless regularly heard comments from anonymous passers-by against the government and the annexation of Kuwait.

But there was no evidence to suggest that the population, preoccupied with daily survival, was ready to rise up against its leadership.

Despite tens of thousands of allied air sorties and thousands of tonnes of bombs and missiles, the actual results of the allied onslaught remain uncertain.

On February 8 and 9, shortly after a British military spokesman announced that road links between Baghdad and Basra—army headquarters for southern Iraq and Kuwait—had been severely disrupted, foreign journalists travelled the 600-kilometer (370-mile) route.

While several bridges had been destroyed, civilian and military vehicles continued to use the road with no great difficulty, thanks to detours and ferry services.

The highway running from Baghdad to the Jordanian border, passing through an area of western Iraq where the allies say Scud missile launchers are located, is likewise still open.

But passage is fraught with danger: the roadside is littered with the hulks of vehicles, military for the most part, while the pavement has been pitted in hundreds of places from aerial bombardment.

Traffic throughout Iraq has been sharply reduced but is far from suspended. There is a constant stream of private cars, civilian and military trucks and buses, most of the time filled with men in uniform.

Despite severe restrictions, gasoline remains available, although officially all of the refineries in the country are out of service, notably the facility at Dawra east of Baghdad, which burned for weeks.

But the refinery in Kirkuk, 230 kilometers (140 miles) north of Baghdad appeared to be intact. While there were no signs of activity at the plant, the huge storage tanks did not appear to have been blackened by fires.

In the capital, Baghdad Radio and television continue to broadcast.

From the earliest hours of the blitz telecommunications centers and transmitting towers were systematically targeted and destroyed.

For civilians, telephones are now a thing of the past, although in the desert one can still spot military transmission vehicles guarded by handfuls of soldiers.

In the south, notably in palm groves on the outskirts of towns, armoured vehicles, artillery pieces, ammunition stocks, missile batteries and other military targets remain untouched by allied bombs.

Near Basra, barracks seen from the road are still standing, albeit empty.

Evidence of underground shelters for men and equipment, which likewise appear to have escaped attack, is also apparent.

The dead are carried back to their hometowns for burial, their flag-draped coffins strapped to the tops of taxis.

Over the past three weeks journalists saw at least 50 such coffins, nearly half in the south. But there was nothing to confirm that the Iraqis had lost as many soldiers as the allies have suggested.

Reporter Views Karbala' Damage

LD2002110291 Tehran IRNA in English 1012 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Karbala, Feb. 20, IRNA—The attacks of the U.S.-led allied forces on the Iraqi holy city of Karbala' so far has claimed 52 lives and wounded 250.

Meanwhile 25 mosques and five churches have been damaged in the attacks, told Iraqi Minister of Waqf (religious endowments) 'Abdallah Fadil to IRNA reporter who was inspecting the city Wednesday.

He added that fuel shortage and damage caused on the bridges not many pilgrims have been able to visit the holy shrine of Imam Husayn (AS) [God's peace be upon him], the third imam of household of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) [peace be upon him] on his birth anniversary on Feb 18. [sentence as received]

According to the minister in missile attacks and air raids over Iraq several historical buildings including one in Karbala' Province have been destroyed.

He said the immediate problems of the Iraqi people were shortage of food and medicine and urged the Muslims of the region to help ease the problems. He also praised the Iranian donations.

IRNA reporter in his 8-hour tour of the city visited the sites of attacks which included a storage house outside Karbala' and also talked to the wounded in a Karbala' hospital and also the holy shrine. While inspecting the city the red alert siren was sounded four times.

'Tremendous Explosions' in Border Cities

LD2002115391 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0930 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] There were more than 30 tremendous explosions in the border cities of the Iraqi provinces of Wasit and Misan [placename as heard] last night and this morning. According to a report by the Central News Unit from Ilam, these explosions were heard in the wake of the air raids launched by the multinational forces, led by America, on the Iraqi cities of Mandali, Zurbatiyah, Bagh Sadir [placename as heard], Shaykh Sadr [placename as heard], Badrah, al-Kut, al-Imarah [placename as heard], 'Ali al-Sharqi, and 'Ali al-Gharbi.

On the basis of this report, at 2134 last night at least seven explosions were heard; and between 0100 and 0515 this morning, in various cities of Iran's Ilam Province, sounds of 3-5 massive explosions were clearly heard every 3 minutes, and the blasts shook windows in most border cities in this province.

Basra, Other Towns Bombarded

LD2102101191 Tehran IRNA in English 0944 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Feb. 21, IRNA—The U.S.-led allied air force bombarded Basra, al-Faw, Abu-al-Khasib, al-Tannumah and al-Zubayr in Iraq at 21:30 GMT hours Wednesday and again at 05:45 GMT Thursday.

The booms of 12 blasts across the border were heard in the Iranian cities of Khorramshahr and Abadan.

Previously at 15:00 hours GMT Wednesday the allied air force had bombarded targets in Iraq's Misan province, during which the booms of blasting missiles and bombs were heard in the Iranian border towns of Huzgan, Bostan and Shush.

Arab Troops Said To Join Battle Against U.S.

NC2102014291 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 2143 GMT 20 Feb 91

[From "The Voice of The Arab Awakening" program: "The Battle of Vengeance Is Coming and the Defeat of Satan's Allies Is Imminent"]

[Text] O brother Arab officers and soldiers in the peninsula and the Arab Gulf: Day after day, the events of the American-Zionist aggression against Iraq and the Arab nation reveal the real intentions behind this malevolent war. The entire world has witnessed the crimes that have been committed by Satan's allies against the Iraqi people and the destruction that has been wreaked by their planes and missiles on towns and homes, and on the symbols of civilization and Islamic sanctities in Iraq. It has become clear to all the honest and good sons of the Arab nation and to the entire world that the real goal of this U.S.-led war is to strike at the will of awakening and steadfastness in the Iraq of Arabism and Islam. However, the Americans' sinister crimes and their barbaric aggression, which have been going on for over a month now, could not bend Iraq's will. The faithful and righteous gathering is expanding and is becoming more determined to achieve victory, whereas the allies of Satan are becoming more disgraced, and facing failure and dismay despite the destructive weapons and sophisticated means of aggression they have been using.

We now find the leaders of America and their despicable followers and the traitors of the Arab nation banking on the expected ground battle on the border of proud Iraq. Now that their air attacks and stray missiles have failed to bend Iraq's will, the enemies have no alternative but to confront the steadfast Iraqi Army on the battlefield, where the two parties and the men meet and confront each other, where the will is put to the test, and where faith shall rise to the zenith of glory and grandeur.

O brother Arab fighter: The decisive battle is coming and the propitious signs of the victory that God has promised the faithful mujahidin are looming on the horizon and outlined on the countenances of the struggling men. There is no escape for the concentrations of atheism and depravity from the fire of the Arab wrath. There is no escape for them from the wrath of God and the fire of hell.

O brother Arab officer and soldier: You must try to save yourself and your honor from the disgrace of treason, humiliation, and submission before it is too late by joining the trench of faith and jihad alongside your Iraqi brothers and by directing your weapons at the heathen, greedy invaders. This decisive battle shall be (?a trap for the American scoundrels) and their allies, who have committed aggression and the ugliest crimes against the Arabs and Muslims. Let this battle be an opportunity to wreak vengeance upon these scoundrels who have desecrated the land of Arabism and Islam.

O Arab fighter: Raise your weapon in the face of the malicious greedy ones. O Arab fighter: Remember the values of Arabism and Islam and the bonds of fraternity. Remember the crimes committed by the Americans and the Zionists in Palestine, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq. It is the battle of vengeance, the battle of right against falsehood, the battle of faith against atheism. God is with the faithful mujahidin. Only God can proffer victory.

Talk Defends Case for 'Historical' Rights

NC1702171891 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1314 GMT 17 Feb 91

[Unattributed talk]

[Text] Brothers: In this confrontation pitting the believers, led by the heroic mujahid Saddam Husayn, against the infidels headed by the corrupt foursome of Bush, Fahd, Shamir, and Husni, along with their companion on the road to hell, the traitor Hafiz al-Asad, the Iraqis and Arabs obviously have right on their side. The infidels are out to trample Iraqi and Arab rights, and to defile all that the Arabs and Muslims revere, with the object of bringing them to heel and doing violence to their values, principles, and honor.

The infidel started their desecration in holy Jerusalem. However, by playing the role of guides and middlemen for the infidel setting out to occupy holy Mecca and the tomb of Prophet Muhammad, Fahd, Husni, and Hafiz have thus committed the ultimate sin. The theft of land, waters, and sanctities by the infidels and their corrupt and debauched allies is an unmistakable attempt to bring the Arabs and Muslims to their knees and soil their honor, principles, and creed. Toward that end, they are using false pretexts that have been exposed for what they are by a billion Arabs and Muslims who have rallied to the grand mujahid Saddam Husayn's battle cry of God Is great.

In this showdown with Bush the corrupt, Iraq can put an unassailable case for its historical land and water rights, and an equally strong case can be made for Arab rights in Palestine, the Golan Heights, and occupied Lebanon. The question arises as to why the corrupt and infidel want to encroach upon these rights and desecrate the Arab and Muslim shrines. As we have just pointed out, the reasons are clear—to bring Arabs and Muslims to their knees, to confiscate their rights, to plunder their resources, and to subjugate them. May the infidel Bush and his treasonous allies be accursed! Great Iraq and its mujahid, believing, patient, and persevering people and its heroic Army, with Arab and Muslim masses on their side, are determined that rights be restored to the believers and that total defeat be the fate of the infidel American-Zionist-Atlantic forces.

With Iraqi steadfastness well into its second month, the days ahead will see Iraq determined to achieve full victory under the banner of God is great.

There is no help except from God, the exalted, the wise. [Koranic verse]

Opposition Radio Rejects Conditional Withdrawal

LD2002211991 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Iraq in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] The forces of the Iraqi opposition have rejected the statement issued by the so-called Revolution Command Council [RCC] on a conditional withdrawal from Kuwait and have called for a full unconditional withdrawal so as to speed up a halt to the devastating war and end the aggression that the tyrant has committed against Kuwait and its people.

The joint action committee of the forces of the Iraqi opposition has issued a statement in Damascus describing the RCC statement as an overt maneuver aimed at misleading people and gaining time, which carries with it the threat of a continued war and devastation as long as the ruling clique wants.

The committee, whose creation was announced on 27 December 1990, includes a broad alliance comprising 17 Iraqi political parties opposed to the tyrant from various trends: Arab nationalist, Kurdish nationalist, Islamic, left-wing, and socialist.

The statement of the Iraqi opposition said that the sons of the Iraqi people, who took to the streets after the RCC statement was broadcast, were expressing their noble joy as soon as they heard the news about readiness to withdraw, and they were also expressing their opposition to the path followed by a tyrant who makes light of the interests of our people and our homeland and those of the entire Islamic and Arab nation.

The statement of the forces of the Iraqi opposition added that this destructive path has caused the catastrophe of the devastating war and the air bombardments that our people have been enduring for over one month now since the day Saddam occupied Kuwait and annexed it as Iraq's palace [as heard], because of his refusal to comply with the resolutions of the Arab League, the Islamic Conference Organization, and the UN Security Council.

The statement went on to say, however, that the sons of our people were soon extremely disappointed when they heard the list of conditions which the RCC statement included, and then they discovered the tyrant's maneuver aimed at preserving his tyrannical rule and his endeavor to escape the just punishment of the people for the offenses, sins, and crimes he has committed. The statement of the Iraqi opposition also pointed out that the RCC declaration reflected the weakness of the tyrant's regime and its retreat, and that this must be perceived by all the forces of our people and by the fraternal and friendly forces in order to support the struggle of our people to halt the destruction, save what can be saved, enforce the withdrawal of the tyrant's troops from Kuwait, reinforce the fight of our people, and back its struggle for the removal of the dictatorship and the building of a new Iraq which will be a factor of stability and peace with its brothers and neighbors and in the region.

Antiwar, Antiregime Demonstrations Reported

LD2102161191 (Clandestine) Voice of Free Iraq in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] The sons of our Iraqi people continue to voice their rejection of the tyrant's defeated regime and voice their condemnation of the occupation of Kuwait.

A number of demonstrations have been staged in various provinces against the practices of the tryant since the invasion of Kuwait. The morale of our forces and Army has been crumbling, generally speaking. A protest was also staged in al-'Amiriyah against the war and against the regime.

Sharon Urges Taking New Political, Military Path

TA2002220891

[Editorial Report] Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew at 1942 GMT on 20 February airs a live 20-minute interview with Construction and Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon by Yoram Ronen and Yig'al Goren.

Asked why he has finally decided to break his vow of silence on the Gulf war, Sharon says he advocates "prevention: how to prevent the firing of missiles on the Israeli civilian population." He says that he believes this is "definitely possible, or at least it is possible to greatly reduce the danger of missile attacks on us." He repeats the view he has maintained since "the first or second missile attack on Israel that, in fact, it is not necessarily Israel that should take action." Rather, "the Americans should be told that they must stop missile attacks on Israel. The United States can do that, either by air or with the help of its special ground forces" such as the 101st and 82d Divisions. Sharon says he originally thought perhaps the suggestion should include a division of the daily operations between the United States and Israel, and "if that is impossible, Israel should simply take every action to protect its civilians. There is no other alternative." He praises President Bush for the "bold decision to go to war, which is no mean feat for a superpower." He also lauds the "organization of the huge forces that gathered there and the U.S. troops for their courage." Still, for the United States, western Iraq is "a totally marginal portion of the theater of operation" in the "strategic, global view."

Sharon sees "several problems" in maintaining the policy of restraint vis-a-vis Iraq's military power, "about which we have known for many years" and against which "I, as defense minister, warned the Americans back in 1981 and 1982 when I argued that Iraq is the greatest danger." One of these problems is the "absolute lack of any connection between the prevention of the firing of missiles and the destruction of the Iraqi military infrastructure." He continues, "I say that the Americans have made great efforts and have hit targets. Still, they have not removed the danger from Israel."

In view of the assessment that Iraq still has chemical capability, "Israel should ask itself whether it should wait and take this risk." "Would the United States suggest that one American city assume such a risk?" he asks. Therefore, "we should again demand that the Americans act." And "if, for some reason, the United States cannot or will not do that, Israel should use its ability" even though no one is "eager to engage in war and everyone realizes the complexity of the matter." "No one in the world" has the right to dictate Israel's reaction, says Sharon. He maintains that the danger to the coalition, if Israel operates at this phase of the war, does not exist, as the major partners will not pull out of it right now. Regarding the danger of a regional conflagration involving Jordan, Syria, and Iran as well, Sharon says "Jordan's entering into the fray can be blocked," although "it may join in a limited fashion." He says he "dismisses" Syria, although in his opinion "there is no difference between al-Asad and Saddam Husayn; only their names are different," because both al-Asad and Mubarak addressed the possibility of Israel's role in the war.

"With 11,000 damaged apartments and another 235 totally destroyed," but with, fortunately, "few casualties," if reports warn of danger, "I think it is impossible to stake the future of a nation," notes Sharon.

He adds: "The path we have taken so far will bring us very serious situations. It is no secret. It was written quite openly in the United States." The United States tells Israel: "You simply cannot operate; we are defending you. Why are you bothering us today with issues such as aid even as we are risking our lives? This is indicative of the future." In Sharon's opinion "this recent demonstration of love for Israel, which is prepared to quietly tolerate hits, will end one day after the war." At that point "Israel will be in a difficult predicament, and I think it must definitely explain, even today, that it has its own terms for negotiations." "In general," he says, "it is impossible to institute a new order" in the Middle East with "old dictatorships."

Sharon claims that "Israel must clarify its basic guidelines, which I think have nothing to do with the plan for so-called democratic elections among the Arabs of Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza District—the very people who currently shout for joy from the roofs" as Iraqi missiles hit Israel. Israel's "preconditions should specify explicitly: first of all, democratization in the Arab countries." Second, "the termination of the arms race, the reduction of the arsenals, and parity between Israel and all its neighbors." Another condition is "the elimination of the terrorist organizations," the cause of a "series of wars in the past 40 years."

"The incumbent government," in Sharon's opinion, "is a thousand times better than the previous one." In a state of affairs requiring "tough decisions," Israel should "prevent, not react." To prevent the loss of lives of even "four elderly women," whose life Sharon values as much as that of a pilot—contrary to a foreign opinion he heard as the first missiles struck Israel—it is "Israel's duty, not just its right" to defend its citizens.

Although Sharon admits he is "worried," he says: "We have the proper answers." What we must do now, he adds, is "to stop for a moment, determine the dangers we face, and embark on a new path politically, militarily, and economically. The road we have taken so far is definitely wrong."

Opinion Said Reflecting Minority

TA2002230091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2205 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Construction and Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon this evening criticized the government's restraint policy.

Sharon said that Israel must take action on its own to eliminate the missile threat from Iraq. Our political correspondent Arye Golan says that the prime minister's associates were not surprised:

The remarks Sharon made this evening on television sounded very familiar to the cabinet ministers. Ever since the first missiles hit Israel, Sharon has urged, in the Defense Cabinet and the government, Israeli retaliation. In one of the recent sessions, after Sharon delivered a long address on this issue, one of the ministers asked the prime minister: Why do you let him talk so much? Mr. Shamir said: We are in a state of restraint, so I am restrained with Sharon, too.

This evening the prime minister's associates said: Sharon's positions are known and do not have the support of the majority of the ministers. Sharon is in the minority on this issue, and the Cabinet makes its decision in a democratic manner, based on a decisive majority.

Will the prime minister reprimand Sharon for making remarks about the war despite the fact that there is a clear instruction that the prime minister and the foreign and defense ministers are the only ones authorized to make public statements on this issue? The prime minister's associates refused to reply to this question this evening.

One Likud minister, who asked not to be named, told us: Sharon's appearance was staggering, not convincing, and not impressive. He did not say how Israel can act when the Americans do not give us the green light. This is perhaps the whole story in a few words.

Foreign Minister Levi Discusses Peace Process

TA2002153491 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1128 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Address by Foreign Minister David Levi to the Knesset in Jerusalem—live]

[Text] Mr. Speaker, Knesset members: In responding to the speeches and arguments raised by the Knesset members on the future of the peace process, I will have to work hard to provide an answer to a situation that is assailed right and left. It seems that concern overshadows the road, but the road should be paved. A mission is also an expression of loyalty and art. Peace must guide all of us. Achieving the goal with a great deal of effort, achieving the best terms for Israel—those are my guidelines in this sphere.

Let me dwell on what has been done, and what I intend to do, fearlessly, Mr. Speaker, since the outbreak of the crisis in the Gulf, the international community has been engaged in consolidating ideas regarding the future of the region. The different ideas are still in a preliminary stage and are raised under the title of "New Order in the Middle East." The Gulf crisis has proved that pretensions about a new world order have been exaggerated. The concept, prevalent for many years, that interbloc conciliation would be able to prevent wars in the world has been proved wrong. The shortsightedness of countries in the East and West that converted Iraq into a drainpipe down which enormous arsenals poured brought about a situation in which the golem they had created now threatens them and the entire world; this golem has sowed the seeds of a new disaster. The international community began to form new lines of thought.

Immediately after Kuwait's occupation, I warned dozens of statesmen with whom I met that Israel is facing a direct threat from Saddam Husayn, and that it would be attacked by Iraq. I was told that we exaggerate the danger, but today those statesmen admit we were right. An analysis of the Middle East picture and the processes that might evolve as a result formed the basis of my work, and of the work of the office I head. There is almost no statesman in Europe, the United States, the Soviet Union, and many other countries whom I did not forewarn about the processes that might take place in the Middle East. Today, we repeatedly hear from those leaders that we were right indeed.

In my speech before the UN General Assembly in September last year I said as follows: A megalomaniac tyrant who is incapable of balanced thinking does not know what a balance of terror is either, nor is he governed by a balance of terror. This horrifying combination of military power and the absence of brakes on its use returns the world to the horrors of the 1930's and 1940's. I added: The recent Middle East events give another opportunity to see the Israeli-Arab conflict in the correct historic and political light. The causes for this prolonged and bitter conflict lie in the long-standing refusal of Arab countries, except Egypt, to recognize the existence of Israel and to put up with its sovereign independence.

Since the beginning of August 1990, the Foreign Ministry has been analyzing the global changes and considering the evolving concepts of a desirable order in the Middle East after Iraq's defeat. We do not limit ourselves to observation, however. We are busy thinking and drawing up plans of action aimed at promoting the State of Israel's interests, while taking into account the developing trends since the outbreak of the crisis. It is absolutely clear to us that the manner in which the crisis ends will greatly influence the regional picture and the possible implementation of the ideas for a new order in the Middle East.

At this stage, we can discern a U.S. commitment to continue to lead the process of stabilizing the Middle East. The Americans are investing thought in ways to limit the Middle East arms race in both conventional and nonconventional weapons. They are discussing ways to rehabilitate the economy of our region, as well as ways to solve the Israel-Arab conflict, of course. Those and other thoughts preoccupy the entire community that answers to the name of free world. When such critical

processes are taking place under our noses, we must try to influence their formulation in such a way that conforms with the State of Israel's interests. A policy of sitting back and doing nothing is a recipe for political damage. This is my belief. The ability to influence the consolidation of processes largely decreases after those processes have run their full course without our input—then Israel will be able to do nothing but react to consolidated initiatives and emerge as rejectionist.

Mr. Speaker, let me go back in time to mention Israel's international status, especially its relations with the United States. Up until several months ago, our relations with the United States were undergoing a crisis of confidence. The administration had the feeling that Israel did not want peace. The United States held Israel responsible for the deadlock in the peace process and used the expression "untrustworthy" in reference to Israel's approach to the process. The U.S. Administration believed and contended that Israel rejected its attempts to help it promote its own peace initiative. These assumptions were far from the truth. No other country aspires to peace as does Israel. My talks with the U.S. secretary of state in early September 1990 and at the end of this month [as heard], as well as the additional, continual contacts we have held since that time, have brought about an unequivocal turnabout in relations between the two countries and have created an atmosphere of trust, coordination, and expanding understanding. The wish to expand topical issues is on our agenda and is mutual.

It has been made crystal clear to the U.S. Administration.... [changes thought] Let me tell my colleagues who have asked questions and who have asked them here that they are very far from understanding the meaning of long-term friendship, friendship that I have shown them for more than a decade now, by walking hand-in-hand with them. Let me dwell on those statements made here. It has been made crystal clear to the U.S. Administration that Israel abides by and is committed to its peace initiative. The U.S. Administration has understood that the deadlock in the peace process was largely caused by the fact that the United States, under Secretary of State Baker, and under pressure from the PLO, added patchwork changes to the peace initiative, completely distorting the outline on which the plan was based, and thereby preventing a peace process that had a chance. That was not the Israeli Government's original initiative.

Israel's peace initiative was based on the fact that the Palestinian problem was created as a result of wars that were forced on Israel and that the Palestinian problem constitutes a single component in the conflict. The Palestinian problem, therefore, can be solved only in the framework of an overall solution for the establishment of peace between Israel and its neighbors. We do not ignore its existence, but only a fool can propose that the State of Israel establish another state, so that the Arab countries, together with that state, can continue to threaten the existence of the Jewish state. [Levi interrupted by heckling from the floor]

Mr. Speaker, Knesset members, on the basis of this historic truth, Israel's peace initiative determined that the process for the promotion of peace will move on two parallel routes: between Israel and its neighbors, and between Israel and the Arab residents of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. The outline of the peace process also provided for free elections for representatives of the Arab residents of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza with whom Israel will negotiate over an interim arrangement. [more heckling from the floor] The root of evil lay in the attempt to integrate the PLO into the process. It is not only that the route for establishing peace between Israel and its neighbors has thus been neglected, but the outline for handling the Palestinian problem has been totally disrupted. My talks with the secretary of state, the decline in the PLO's status in the wake of the Gulf crisis, and the U.S. recognition that the PLO can no longer serve any role in advancing the peace process, created a basis for understanding and renewed trust between Israel and the United States to advance the peace process. At the same time, intensive political work has taken place in our contacts with European countries since July 1990. I had talks with the EC troika in Jerusalem, and continual contacts have been held, in Israel, Europe, and the United States, with 12 European foreign ministers and prime ministers. In the course of this period, especially against the background of the Gulf crisis, there has been a significant improvement in the attitude of the United States and West European states to Israel and its positions on the peace process. In the free world and in some Arab capitals, there is now a growing understanding for Israel's demand to end the anomaly of the situation of the war that continues between Israel and its Arab neighbors, and for the need to apply to our region without delay the thought patterns and political processes that led to the fall of the wall of hatred between the two parts of Europe. The nations of the world are attentive to Israel's argument that the concept that was put into effect between East and West, between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, whereby conflicts should be resolved through peaceful means, should apply to our region as well. Moreover, the U.S. resolve to uproot the possibility of another war in the Middle East, as well as the increasing defense and economic dependence of the moderate Arab countries—the members of the current coalition—on the United States, brings closer the idea of conciliation between Israel and the Arab countries, in addition to a solution to the Palestinian problem.

Mr. Speaker, since the start of the Gulf crisis, we have not allowed processes or thoughts about our region to develop without our intervention. We did not tire of repeatedly explaining that the basic problem at the root of the conflict has always been the pan-Arab hostility, and that a solution to the Palestinian problem itself will not remove the threat from the State of Israel. Therefore, I will not dwell....[changes thought] I have a lot more to

say on this issue, but perhaps we will soon be able to have a serious, noncontroversial discussion of the future of the Middle East, including Israel. Anybody who wants to obtain achievements before negotiations, as a condition for opening negotiations, will find Israel very steadfast and firm in its position indeed. For its part, Israel calls on its neighbors for direct negotiations without prior conditions by any party. Israel views the possible emergence of a new situation after the crisis, of a desire for this war to be the last war, as the beginning of hope for direct negotiations between Israel and its neighbors. At the same time, Israel adheres to its initiative for solving the Palestinian problem, the method and outline of which could be followed to achieve a solution. The PLO is stepping down and will necessarily step down, from the stage. It has not been and will not be our partner. On the other hand, let me tell my colleagues who ask me from this rostrum whether I am prepared to talk with those in Judaea and Samaria who stood on the roofs and rejoiced at the missile attacks on Israel: If I do not want to talk to others, I will indeed speak to them. If I reject the PLO, I must do everything to find among the inhabitants of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza those willing to accept Israel's peace initiative and discuss it with them without fear. If they do not want to do so, that is their business. [further heckling]

Israel aspires to peace. That is the sacred and main goal underlying all of our activity. We will be able to bring peace to all residents of the region. Our stubbornness is a direct result of our position in defense of our survival in this region of the world, as all nations of the world realize. Despite all promises and advice, the weak are devoured and eliminated. We have such examples in front of our eyes. A strong Israel promotes peace because its enemies understand that it cannot be defeated. A weak Israel creates among its enemies the hope that it can be destroyed. We must, therefore, be strong in our might and in the justness of our cause. We must be strong in our might, our ability to nurture unity among our ranks and to reinforce our defense capability; we must be strong in our justness, regarding the promotion of the peace process according to the Israeli Government's initiative. We said that the PLO is an obstacle to peace, and it is an obstacle, as has been proven. It has not been our partner, nor will it be.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the postcrisis opportunities are as great as the risks. Israel must not remain on the sidelines and wait for what might happen and what might be worked out, as then it would have to react and defend itself. It must act out of faithfulness to its policy and full trust for its emissaries. This is how we will act. I will not let go; I will not wait; I will not fear or be daunted by an attack from the right or left. This is the goal we all share. Our policy requires that I invest my full force and energy, every hour and every day, for our sake, for the sake of our children. Thank you.

I suggest that all proposals raised here today be passed for discussion by the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

Government 'Relieved' U.S. Loan Guarantee Signed

TA2002224291 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 2205 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Report by political correspondent Natan Gutman]

[Text] U.S. Secretary of State James Baker this evening called Foreign Minister David Levi and notified him that he had signed the guarantee for the $400 million loan for the housing of immigrants. The sum will be given in a single chunk, and not in three installments, as was agreed upon before.

Naturally, Jerusalem is very pleased with this guarantee, and not just that. Jerusalem sees this as an opening for additional guarantees in the future, and as symbolizing the end of the current dispute between Israel and the United States. In a 30-minute conversation, Secretary Baker updated the foreign minister on the developments of the Gulf war and reiterated the U.S. determination to attain its goals. I assure you, Baker said, that the same determination and intensity is applied to the continued effort to eliminate the missile launchers that threaten Israel. The secretary of state also said that he expects to meet Levi in Washington soon to construct and coordinate together a way to attain peace.

Foreign Minister Levi said that he is certain that the United States will accomplish its goals in the Gulf. The United States is giving the world a lesson in raising a strong and just fist against tyranny and aggression, David Levi said. These are the initial details of the conversation between David Levi and James Baker.

Jerusalem feels relieved, and we can say that the Shoval affair is somewhat behind us.

U.S. Stand on War Role Causes 'Frustration'

TA2002195291 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Political sources in Jerusalem believe that the United States has no intention of ending the military effort against Iraq and that the ground operation may begin soon. Israel, for now, continues to adhere to the line of refraining from involvement. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Halperin reports:

A tiny crack—that is all Israel needs to be able to participate in the campaign. That crack, however, has not yet opened. The U.S. determination is very much to the government's liking, but this satisfaction is mixed with frustration: Israel has not contributed to the effort, and the Americans are continuing to tell us to sit tight and not interfere.

There is a distinct feeling in Jerusalem that if we do not wish to be slapped in the face one more time, we must not irritate this administration, an administration that for the moment is disinclined to tolerate any interference or deviation from the main course of the military effort. This feeling is so deeply entrenched that Israel does not

even dare submit an official request for the special assistance that was mentioned during Mr. Arens' visit to the United States, thinking that it might be wiser to wait until the end of the war.

Meanwhile, the foreign minister and the prime minister share the view that it is necessary to swallow hard and do nothing. Yet the assessment is that if the ground operation starts, the chemical weapons risk will increase. There is no guarantee that the bombing of western Iraq has disabled the Iraqis' nonconventional capability. If Saddam Husayn decides to use those weapons, it may well be that the opinion of the decisionmakers in Jerusalem will change. The plans, as everyone knows, are ready.

In the political sphere, the foreign minister certainly wants to hit the road right now. Next week he is scheduled to meet with the EC troika, and the meeting with James Baker will be rescheduled soon.

Ben-Aharon Views Relations With United States

TA1902080091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0605 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Telephone interview with Yosi Ben-Aharon, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, by Shalom Qital—live]

[Text] [Qital] Good morning, Mr. Ben-Aharon.

[Ben-Aharon] Good morning.

[Qital] It is not all that pleasant when the prime minister has to apologize, even if the apology is to the U.S. President. It was necessary because of the Shoval affair. What do you say to that?

[Ben-Aharon] Sometimes a reasonable person—a public figure and a politician—makes a remark that irritates his hosts. This is what happened in this case. It is possible that it came against the backdrop of several things that preceded it in U.S.-Israeli relations. We have very close contacts, and we discuss very sensitive issues. They are upset about the settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza; they want to make sure that the $400 million housing guarantee is not used for settling new immigrants in the territories. We want to be in a position to defend ourselves against the Iraqi missiles and not solely rely on the U.S. activity. All of these are matters for close and tight discussions, which are sometimes not too easy. Against this background, when the ambassador uses terms such as: I demand [preceding two words in English]—and I doubt whether he said it precisely this way, because Zalman Shoval is known to be an easygoing person who uses careful language, but this is what emerged from that REUTER report—such things do happen. We must, however, see this incident in its proper context and focus on the important aspects of U.S.-Israeli relations. There are issues which are very important to us, our future, safety, and economy.

[Qital] We will soon return to this. With your permission, however, I would like to refer to this incident. I have not yet seen all the morning papers, but at least one paper, DAVAR, blames you and says: Yosi Ben-Aharon, the director general of the Prime Minister's Office, was behind the Shoval remarks that caused the diplomatic storm. This is your chance to respond.

[Ben-Aharon] I do not have to respond. Everyone in his right mind understands that Jerusalem does not issue instructions to the ambassador telling him how to speak or to whom to grant interviews. An ambassador would be a very small and pathetic person if he needed such instructions. The whole story has no basis.

[Qital] Let us touch upon the really substantial issues in U.S.-Israeli relations. Even if an ambassador makes the remarks Shoval has, and even if the language was not too diplomatic, does such an outraged response not indicate that there is something more deeply wrong in the relations between the two countries than their simply being upset over the use of undiplomatic language?

[Ben-Aharon] Judging from my experience in foreign relations, the step taken by the U.S. President is undoubtedly grave. Unlike his predecessors in our times, this President runs U.S. foreign policy to a large extent on a personal basis. He likes face-to-face meetings with his interlocutors, talks to them on the phone, and asks them over to hear them and talk to them in person. That is why his sensitivity to remarks made by a friendly state such as Israel may be greater than one would expect. Still, let me stress, this is more a personal than a substantive thing. That is why the Israeli Government and the prime minister did well when they drew a line and said that they would like to view this incident as a regrettable one, as one that is over, and suggested that we focus on substance.

[Qital] So what is your impression of the substance of the relations between us, now that there are some unpleasant sounds but, at the same time, certainly some positive aspects as well?

[Ben-Aharon] On the public-popular level, relations have not been better for quite a long time, because Israel is perceived by the U.S. public, media, and Congress as a faithful ally which is suffering because of this war, while exercising restraint to allow the U.S. Army do its job. This finds expression in editorials and commentaries throughout the United States.

[Qital] Is it not a bit frustrating that we need a war and missiles falling on Israel to attain such a status in the United States?

[Ben-Aharon] What can we do? We are not in control of every act and eventuality. The Six-Day War was also followed by an amazing rise in Israel's popularity. Did we ask for that war? This is our reality. This is what happened, and we should take things the way they happen. Saddam Husayn did not do what he did in Kuwait because of us. So this is the popular aspect,

which is largely expressed in Congress. Let me remind you that Congress has passed with an almost unanimous vote several resolutions which support Israel. It happens only once every few years that the House of Representatives on both sides of the political line is so unanimous.

[Qital] Traditionally, Congress shows more support for Israel than, let us say, the State Department.

[Ben-Aharon] This is clear. This has been the tradition since World War II, and not only since the State of Israel was founded, because the State Department considers itself the body in charge of U.S. relations throughout the Middle East. If we consider the fact that there are 20 Arab countries and only one Jewish one, naturally the support sometimes goes to the Arab side.

Let me refer to the issue of relations with the U.S. Administration. I witnessed the discussions the prime minister held with the President's special envoy, Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, who visited us twice, as well as the correspondence and phone conversations between the U.S. President and the prime minister. There is no doubt in my mind that compared with the times before the national unity government fell, the improvement in relations is very significant. Naturally, this is also an outcome of what took place in the Gulf. There were lessons to be learned from the Gulf that did not escape the U.S. leaders. I believe that today everyone understands that the Arab-Israeli conflict is not the root of all evil in the Middle East. Today everyone understands that the organization called the PLO is not exactly the reliable representative with which one can hold negotiations to solve what is called the Palestinian problem. All of this influences the decision makers, as well as those who wanted to place the Palestinian issue before all others concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict.

[Qital] If I read you correctly, you are not too concerned by the unpleasant voices coming at us from the U.S. Administration?

[Ben-Aharon] Certainly not. I am trying to be objective and not serve some interest, because we have very free relations with a very complex system of U.S. representatives and visitors. There is no doubt that despite these uneasy spots and incidents, which are truly incidental, and despite the fact that this administration has some complaints against us and disagreements with us concerning the final territorial arrangement—we know that it is no secret that the U.S. Administration would like us to adopt the formula of territories for peace, for instance, which is not acceptable to the Israeli Government—all of this does not affect the essence of our relations, which contain very important aspects—for us and for the United States—on a wide spectrum of issues.

[Qital] Let me try your objectivity on another issue: Are you being objective in the Levi-Arens struggle?

[Ben-Aharon] Being a civil servant, I cannot take a stand on such issues. I am trying hard to deal with the substantive issues only, although certainly the two aspects are intertwined. Because of my position, I must respect every elected representative and minister, and I am trying very hard to help them and the prime minister, who is the leader of this government.

[Qital] Is Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir affected by such incidents?

[Ben-Aharon] The prime minister is an experienced and wise Jew. He knows his way around international relations, as well as political relations. I would not say that he is not moved when there are personal problems. When you are experienced, however, and try to isolate the relative importance of things from the personal aspect, it does have an effect. I believe that the prime minister is largely respected because he keeps stressing the substantive issues, while downplaying the personal ones.

[Qital] Mr. Ben-Aharon, thank you.

[Ben-Aharon] Thank you and shalom.

Officials Note 'Series' of Causes for U.S. Anger

TA1902101491 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 19 Feb pp 1, 12

[Report by diplomatic correspondent David Makovsky]

[Text] Prime Minister Shamir sent President Bush a letter yesterday, expressing regret for critical remarks against the administration made by Ambassador Zalman Shoval.

[Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on 19 February carries a report by the DAVAR correspondent to Washington on page 2, saying that "Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir's letter to President Bush expresses the prime minister's confidence in Israel's Ambassador in Washington Zalman Shoval." The report adds that "the content and tone of the letter seem to indicate that Yossi Ben-Aharon, the director general of the Prime Minister's Office, was behind Shoval's remarks in the REUTER interview."]

Senior Israeli officials say privately that Shoval's comments—in which he openly accused the U.S. of giving Israel the "run-around" on approving the long-awaited $400 million in housing loan guarantees and compensation for Gulf war costs—were just the latest in a series of Israeli actions at which the U.S. took umbrage.

For instance, these officials say that when Secretary of State James Baker summoned Shoval to his office last Thursday [14 February], he alleged that Israel was trying to go over the administration's head on aid issues by negotiating directly with key congressional leaders. Congress, Israel's traditional bastion of support in Washington, decides on appropriations.

Also, these officials say that Baker told Defense Minister Moshe Arens during their meeting last week that it was inappropriate to request aid at a time when U.S. soldiers

were dying in a war beneficial to Israel, especially since the Patriots were largely delivered as grants.

Further, the administration has not forgotten Finance Minister Yitzhaq Moda'i's $13 billion loan and grant request blunder in talks with Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger last month.

Israeli officials are now pessimistic that the administration is seriously considering Israel's $1 billion aid request.

Despite declining to comment publicly, officials say the Bush administration is also privately seething about the inclusion of pro-transfer MK [Knesset Member] Rehav'am Ze'evi (Moledet) in the Cabinet, viewing it as a signal of a hardening in Jerusalem's diplomatic position in the postwar period.

The administration held back some of its criticisms until last week, observers say, because the overriding issue has been to ensure Israel's policy of not retaliating to Scud missile attacks.

Meanwhile, in his letter to Bush, and in a public appearance before the World Sephardic Organization yesterday, Shamir extolled the American president's leadership of the war effort. In his speech, he termed Bush's direction of the war as "excellent."

[Writing on pages 1 and 2 of Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew on 19 February, Hemi Shalev and 'Aliza Wallach report: "Prime Minister Shamir's letter to President Bush was not conveyed through the Foreign Ministry, as is customary. Sources in the Prime Minister's Bureau pointed out that the reason for this was the fear of leaks originating in the Foreign Ministry, adding that David Levi should put his house in order' before Shamir's confidential letters can again be relayed through his ministry."

[The report adds that "in the upcoming days, the Foreign Ministry plans to advise the State Department that the data cited in the report [on the scope of government-sponsored construction in the territories] published by MK's Dedi Zucker and Hayim Oron are invalid and do not reflect government policies. With this clarification, the ministry hopes to put an end to the persistent holdup of the $400 million guarantees, in the hope that the guarantees will be received in the very near future."]

Reportage on Defense Minister Arens' Activities

♦

Meets U.S. Senators

TA1902200191 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Minister Moshe Arens' meeting with four U.S. senators ended in the defense minister's office about an hour ago. The [Scud missile attack] siren sounded in the course of the meeting, and the members of the U.S. mission, along with the defense minister's party, were left in the sealed room, which was where the meeting was held.

During the meeting with Senators Inouye, Warner, Stevens, and Nunn, the defense minister emphasized that cooperation with the United States has improved markedly. Israel appreciates President Bush's leadership, said Arens, as well as the aerial activity to remove the missile threat to Israel.

Even though a missile was fired tonight, all in all the number of missiles being launched at Israel from western Iraq has decreased. However, Iraq still has the capability to fire more missiles.

The meeting was also attended by the chief of staff, the deputy chief of staff, the head of the Intelligence Branch, and the Air Force commander. The four senators arrived in Israel after visiting the U.S. troops in the Gulf for a first-hand review of the preparations for the ground offensive.

Comments on USSR Mideast Position

TA2102083491 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0740 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Report by Mira Amsalem on Defense Minister Moshe Arens' address to the Jewish Agency Board of Directors closing session in Jerusalem on 21 February]

[Text] Defense Minister Arens said: I think President Gorbachev's recent steps were aimed at strengthening the Soviet position in the Middle East and the Arab world. It is my belief, however, added Arens, that the Soviet Union will not regain the position of strength it had until recently in this region, although it is making moves in that direction. I do not think that today's Arab world will regard the Soviet Union as a strong superpower, capable of influencing events on a par with the United States. Many people think and know, he added, that the United States is the only remaining superpower in the region.

The defense minister devoted part of his speech to criticism of Western aid in the arming of Saddam Husayn, specifically pointing to the French policy.

As for Syria's stand, he noted that although it is now part of the coalition, Syria and Iraq still share many common elements. We must not forget, said the defense minister, that Saddam Husayn is the chairman of the Iraqi Ba'th Party, while al-Asad is the chairman of that party's Syrian faction. It is hoped that his participation in the coalition will lead President al-Asad, who possesses arms, troops, and chemical capability almost equal to Iraq's, to show flexibility and readiness to enter a peace process with Israel.

USSR Wants 'Face-Saving' for Saddam

TA2002193891 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in English 1800 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens believes President Bush will stick to his guns and demand that Saddam Husayn withdraw unconditionally from Kuwait. He was talking to reporter David Essing:

[Begin recording] [Arens] I think the Soviets are trying to provide a face-saving formula for Saddam Husayn, but I think that President Bush will settle for nothing less than the objectives that he stated very clearly at the outset of this (?story).

[Essing] But what would it mean for Israel if Saddam Husayn did accept this offer and pulled out of Kuwait with his remaining forces still intact?

[Arens] Well, I have to remind you that Saddam Husayn's forces are not intact anymore; they have suffered great damage during the past months, and I think by the time that President Bush's objectives have been achieved, not much will be left of the Iraqi military potential.

[Essing] How badly hit have the Iraqi forces been hit today?

[Arens] Today or up to today?

[Essing] Up to today.

[Arens] I think they have been very badly hit in all areas.

[Essing] Is there a danger that if a land offensive begins against Iraq that, as some Israeli experts think, there could be an increase in the missile attacks against Israel?

[Arens] The danger is always there. I think the Iraqi capability to launch missiles against Israel has been significantly reduced as a result of allied air action over western Iraq, but I think the capability is still there. [end recording]

Netanyahu on Impact of Gulf War Conclusion

TA2002200591 Tel Aviv Educational Television Network in Hebrew 1500 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Studio interview with Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by Dan Shilon—live]

[Text] [Shilon] Good evening, Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

[Netanyahu] Good evening.

[Shilon] Is this the end of the current state of war? Would you define it as good for Israel, a catastrophe from Israel's standpoint, or worse?

[Netanyahu] If the war ends as things stand right now, it will be bad not only for Israel, but for the whole world. First of all, Saddam Husayn is still in Kuwait. He is undoubtedly trying to procrastinate, drag his feet, and otherwise find all sorts of ways to prevent the allies from launching their ground offensive—just like he tried to put off the air attack before. Yet he is not showing any signs of any real change on the ground. In words, perhaps; but not in deeds. That is why he must first be removed.

[Shilon] Are the Americans liable to buy his words?

[Netanyahu] I believe so. All the contacts I and others have held, and all the information that has been filing in—and I am a great skeptic—lead me to believe that the Americans will not fall into this trap, which is very thinly disguised. [paragraph as heard]

[Shilon] I did not understand your reply. You seem to have said two opposite things in your response: You said that they may swallow the bait of Saddam Husayn's words, and in the same breath added that you believe they will probably not do so.

[Netanyahu] No, no. I maintain that he is trying to delay their actions with words, but not in deeds. I do not believe, in fact I know, that the Americans are aware of what he is trying to pull and do not want to fall into his trap.

[Shilon] Even though the Soviets are trying to regain the role of superpower in this game?

[Netanyahu] This is a Soviet initiative. The Soviets are in this coalition, the United States is allowing the USSR to try, but I think the Americans are adamant, understanding that there are two issues here.

[Shilon] Let us talk about the postwar reality. Let us say the war ends and there is a new world order. We Israelis will be left with the same old political initiative that the government conceived about a year ago. Is that all?

[Netanyahu] I think we might be able to achieve a major breakthrough, provided that a precondition is, first of all, met, and that is not only the removal of Saddam Husayn from Kuwait but the destruction, or total elimination, of the Iraqi threat. That threat looms over all of our heads. Today it threatens us with missiles, but it can, by the same token, also threaten others. I do not think the United States will make do only with his removal from Kuwait. We believe it is necessary to guarantee that Iraq's offensive capability is liquidated. This is necessary. Why? Because I do not believe there is a single Arab country—not to mention the Palestinian Arabs—that will enter into a political process with us if Saddam remains alive. I have received a message recently from the potential leadership in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. It said more or less this: If he remains alive, we will follow him.

[Shilon] Did they talk about him specifically or about his regime?

[Netanyahu] Certainly. The message was: If he remains alive, we will follow him. If he goes, everything is open.

Now, who is that person that they referred to? It is not 'Arafat. From their point of view, 'Arafat is a derivative, a tool in the hands of Saddam Husayn, just as he has indeed shown himself to be. The dynamics of Arab politics is largely connected first of all to the necessary point that I mentioned earlier, namely the removal of that tyrant who is threatening to become a latter-day Salah al-Din, which is indeed his desire. Peace with Salah al-Din is impossible. So first of all he needs to be removed. If he is, I believe a certain development could occur in the Arab world. However, like every such development, it requires external encouragement. The question, therefore, is where the West—and primarily the United States—will be leading. If it leads to the termination of the state of war with the Arabs, I think perhaps we might be able to find some crack, some opening. If it leads, in the case of the Palestinians, to the removal of the PLO and the bolstering of those elements in the area from whom we have been hearing, we may be able to make progress. If that is not the case, I think it will be impossible: We will in fact be going back to square one, and this will be a disaster. I think this will be a woefully missed opportunity.

[Shilon] You mean pressure on Israel?

[Netanyahu] Possibly. I cannot rule it out. I think we will be able to withstand these pressures because I believe we are far better armed with new weapons. I have visited London recently and noticed the reaction of the people and the major British press....

[Shilon, interrupting] As long as the Scuds keep falling on us.

[Netanyahu] No, regardless of that. We talked not like we are talking now on television, even though I did that, too; it was at a private dinner with the leading journalists in Britain, some of whom are not our fervent supporters. I have noticed that whenever you raise the issues of Israel's security problem, the difficulty of surviving in the region, the PLO's true face—all those subjects which we would before raise and yet no one would take seriously—today I can sense a certain change. We can have an effect not only in Europe, but primarily in the United States, where Congress is supportive. I am not even ruling out some influence over the U.S. Administration. There are some people there, too, who listen. I am therefore not impressed by pressure, provided that we take action and apply our counterpressure.

[Shilon] Thank you for coming to our studio, Binyamin Netanyahu.

Papers View Soviet Peace Proposal, U.S. Response

Soviet Plan Seeks 'Balanced Equation'

TA1902172691 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 19 Feb 91 p 5

[Editorial: "The Role of Soviet Diplomacy"]

[Text] Since the outbreak of the Gulf crisis the world realized that a peaceful containment of this crisis hinges on finding a balanced equation that would enjoy the simultaneous consent of Iraq and the United States. Apparently what Soviet diplomacy is presently engaged in relies on this basis.

We will not delve into the reasons for the current Soviet move. There is no doubt that the domestic and foreign effects on the Soviet leadership played an important role in the current moves, but the visit by Yevgeniy Primakov, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's personal envoy, to Baghdad a week ago caused the Iraqi Revolution Command Council to propose the framework of principles that clearly included the Iraqi leadership's agreement to deal with Security Council Resolution 660, which calls for withdrawal from Kuwait.

The announcement of the Iraqi principles enjoyed the support of the Soviet Union, China, and many other countries, including some of those participating in the war against Iraq. Undoubtedly, the talks which Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz held yesterday with the Soviet leadership in Moscow were based on the Iraqi announcement as well as on the proposals of the United States and its allies.

The Iraqi foreign minister returned to his country carrying a peace plan proposed by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev. We believe that the clauses of this plan underscore the effort to find a common denominator between the minimal points of the Iraqi and U.S. positions.

The principles proposed by the Iraqi leadership clarified Iraq's strict adherence to international legitimacy. The assumption was that the UN Security Council would study these principles carefully and in depth, especially since the war against Iraq is being waged under the cover of Security Council Resolution 678.

Now that the Soviet Union, with its weight, has entered the diplomatic arena, this will lead to changes in the course of events in the Gulf. It is not expected that the United States will respond to the Soviet president's plan in the same way that it responded to the Iraqi Revolution Command Council statement.

Diplomacy is trying to open a path amid death and destruction. We hope that it will prepare the ground to extricate the region and its peoples from the cycles and perils of the war's escalation.

Bid To End Gulf War Welcomed

TA2002234291 Jerusalem AL-NAHAR in Arabic 19 Feb 91 pp 1, 7

[Editorial: "What Will Happen After the Moscow Meeting?"]

[Text] The world is pinning great hopes on the results of the visit to Moscow by Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz. This visit constitutes the last chance for preventing the bloody ground war on Kuwait's soil, just as

the Baker-'Aziz meeting in Geneva in the second week of last month was considered the last chance for preventing the outbreak of war.

The visit by 'Aziz to Moscow and his meeting with President Gorbachev come against the background of the Iraqi statement issued last Friday and in which the Iraqi Revolution Command Council announced for the first time since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that it was ready to withdraw from Kuwait and accept Security Council Resolution 660, provided a cease-fire takes effect and talks are resumed. While the U.S. response came swiftly through President Bush, who rejected the initiative and termed it a hoax and a ploy, President Gorbachev sent a message to the U.S. President calling for restraint before launching the ground offensive, thus providing an opportunity for discussion of the Iraqi initiative.

There is a clear difference between the U.S. and Soviet perspectives. Whereas the U.S. Administration sees a half full glass of water and says that the glass is half empty, the Soviets say that the glass is half full. The two sides see the same glass, but one side sees the positive part of the glass and the other side the negative part. Since the beginning of the crisis, the Soviet Union has tried and is trying to persuade Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait and reach a peaceful settlement. Soviet circles have described the Iraqi initiative as an important beginning. The Soviet leadership, together with the Iranian leadership, has appealed to the United States and its allies to respond positively to Baghdad's initiative.

Although the Soviet Union is placing its weight behind the peace moves and is maneuvering on the international level to achieve a cease-fire and end the conflict by peaceful means, it is not only serving Iraq by such moves but also itself. Soviet intervention will restore the Soviet Union's status in the international arena as a superpower that is aware of its responsibilities toward the international community. In the past we have criticized the weak Soviet position, but today we are observing that the Soviet move stems from responsibility and sensitivity toward the Soviet Union's old friends.

The Iraqi initiative is worthy of consideration. Iraq's acceptance for the first time of Security Council Resolution 660 signifies the invalidity of Security Council Resolution 678, which authorized the international community to use force to evict Iraq from Kuwait. Should the U.S.-led alliance opt for peace, then there would be no victor or vanquished in this war. Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait will not mean that Iraq has been defeated. Moreover, agreement by the United States to stop the war and move toward the negotiating table will not cause it any loss. There will be no peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis unless the parties feel that some of their demands have been met.

Hence, the role of the United Nations in exerting its responsibility and authority has become more important now. The United Nations was founded in order to establish peace and stability all over the world.

Rabin Warns of Complacency to Syrian Threat

TA1902113291 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 19 Feb 91 p 1

[Report by Knesset correspondent Asher Wallfish]

[Text] Syria's arsenal of non-conventional weapons is more menacing than Iraq's, especially if U.S. satellite data on missile launchings is not made available, former defense minister Yitzhaq Rabin warned yesterday. But he dismissed suggestions that the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] deterrent capability had been eroded because of the government's policy of restraint.

"In a war between us and Arab states, the other side knows that we possess a deterrent," he said. "They take seriously our past reminders that any Arab attack on our civilian population could lead to the destruction of Baghdad or Damascus."

But "we should not be complacent about the Syrian threat," he told the Labor Knesset faction. "We possess no effective answer to the missiles now in the hands of the Arab states. We will probably never enjoy a situation similar to the one we have today, where thanks to our understanding with the U.S., their satellite system gives us five and a half minutes warning of a Scud launching."

"If we decline to draw the necessary conclusions from this onetime advantage, we could face a security catastrophe."

He said that Syria already has chemical warheads, and that it has received two types of advanced missiles which can hit targets here: one with an 80k. [kilometer] range and the other with a 100k. range. "These are more effective than what Saddam has.

"Syria has not dared fire its missiles at us because it realized it couldn't get away with it. But our problem is not merely to maintain our deterrent capability. It is also to avoid getting into a situation where war might be a possibility."

Rabin persuaded the Labor faction not to introduce a motion of no confidence in the government on the grounds that it failed to prepare the home front adequately for the present emergency.

Labor chairman Shim'on Peres, who led the minority backing the no confidence move, denied that he ever proposed calling for a judicial commission of inquiry into the state of security on the home front. However, he insisted that the government did not merit the confidence, because of the collapse of agriculture and Prime Minister Shamir's reluctance to formulate diplomatic initiatives for the postwar period.

Iran, Jordan To Reopen Embassies 'This Week'

LD1902211391 Tehran IRNA in English 1935 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Amman, Feb 19, IRNA—Jordan and the Islamic Republic of Iran are expected soon to reopen their diplomatic missions after the restoration of diplomatic ties in January.

A Jordanian diplomat is to leave for Tehran this week for the formal reopening of the embassy, while an Iranian diplomat was expected in Amman this week to reopen Iran's mission.

Muhammad al-Daher, the Jordanian charge d'affaires who was the last diplomat of Jordan to leave Tehran in 1981, is to resume his post this week.

A senior Jordanian official told the JORDAN TIMES that "it was only a matter of procedures."

Nara Ghian, who served as charge d'affaires at the Islamic Republic of Iran's mission in Bahrain, is expected to come to Amman this week to open the mission, the daily reported.

A diplomat from the Iranian Embassy in Damascus was here last week to inspect the premises of the Iranian mission which is situated in the Jabal al-Amman close to the centre.

The Jordanian mission in Tehran was housed in a rented premises.

Jordan has yet to name its ambassador to Tehran, nor Iran has designated its envoy to Amman, the Jordanian official told the daily.

The paper said diplomatic sources had indicated that Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati might drop in Amman on his way home from Bonn.

But an unnamed diplomatic circle told the daily that Velayati's visit was not certain.

"Mr. Velayati has an open invitation from Jordan which he has expected," the official told the daily and added that "diplomatic exchanges need not be a hindrance, in view of the fact that our foreign minister (Taher al-Masri) received a most cordial and warm welcome when he visited Iran last month."

Diplomatic ties between Iran and Jordan were cut in 1981 following Amman's strong support of Baghdad during the war with Iran.

Formal ties were resumed with the signing of a protocol at the United Nations by the chief Iranian and Jordanian delegates last month.

Tehran-Amman relations have warmed up since then in the wake of exchange visits by parliamentary delegations of the two countries.

A group of Iranian parliamentarians visited Amman last week and a joint statement issued by the two houses underscored a large area of agreement between them, particularly in the context of the Persian Gulf war.

Trade is also growing between the two Muslim countries. The first shipment of Jordanian phosphates to Iran, worth about $66 million, is expected to leave Jordan by the end of this month.

Jordan is also considering to import oil from Iran to make up for shortfalls in the flow of oil from Iraq due to the war.

Information Minister Lauds Iran's Gulf Stance

LD2002183691 Tehran IRNA in English 1104 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Amman, Feb. 20, IRNA—Jordan's Government Wednesday heaped praise on what it called Iran's "positive position" towards the Persain Gulf crisis. "I think the Iranians have been extremely positive. They have played a role in a very constructive manner and have rebuilt their relations with Iraq and the region in a very very short period," Jordanian Information Minister Ibrahim 'Izz-al-Din told in a briefing to foreign reporters. "I think the Iraqis would be extremely positive in relations with the Iranians. The Iranians were very positive at a very very difficult time. Iran is of course now a regional power and it will continue to be a regional power," the minister stressed in reply to a question on the future of regional security after the war.

Answering IRNA's question on the expected visit of Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayti to Amman, 'Izz-al-Din said the trip would take place very soon. On the re-opening of Iranian Embassy in Amman and Jordan's mission in Tehran, the minister said the two countries were looking forward to the move.

Jordan and the Islamic Republic of Iran restored diplomatic ties in January after a break of eight years.

King Husayn Phones Yemen's Salih on Soviet Plan

NC2102020291 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn had a telephone conversation with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih during which they exchanged views on the Soviet peace plan and the efforts being made to put an end to the Gulf war and resolve the crisis through peaceful means.

Royal Decree Pardons 706 Army Deserters

NC2102100891 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 21 Feb 91 p 1

[By Khulud al-Ja'uni]

[Text] Amman—A royal decree has been issued pardoning 706 convicted Army deserters. The competent authorities began to release them as of last night.

Sudanese Delegation Arrives En Route to Baghdad

EA1902160991 Khartoum SUNA in English 0920 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] Amman, 19 Feb (SUNA)—The Sudanese information delegation which left for Iraq to cover the news of Umm al-Mara'ik [mother of battles] has arrived to the Jordanian capital last Sunday on its way to Baghdad, to which the delegation will leave during the coming two days. While in Jordan, the delegation met the chairman of the Jordanian Journalists' Union and handed him a message from the steering committee of the Sudanese Journalist Union dealing with co-operation between the two unions in all fields. The meeting also reviewed the developments in the area in light of the imperialist aggression against Iraq.

The Sudanese delegation had also acquainted the Jordanian Journalists' Union with the recent developments in Sudan regarding the applying of shari'ah laws and federal system in the Sudan. The Sudanese delegation hailed the role of the Jordanian mass media in face of the western mass media attack on the Arab nation.

House Islamic Bloc Statement on 'Brutal Attacks'

NC1902170491 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 19 Feb 91 p 4

[Text] Amman—The deputies of the Islamic movement bloc at the House of Representatives have condemned the criminal U.S. determination to continue its aggression against Iraq and step up its brutal attacks on the Iraqi people, cities, and installations—an aggression which indicates the evil intentions and the undeclared goals of the infidel forces of the alliance, which is aimed at destroying Iraq's force and neutralizing every Islamic effort to achieve progress.

This was stated in a statement issued by the bloc explaining that the United States has continued its aggression after the initiative Iraq launched from a position of strength and capability—an initiative that accepts the principle of withdrawal from Kuwait on the basis of a condition that represents the demands of Arabs and Muslims everywhere, not just Iraq's interests. Many states, including the Soviet Union, the PRC, India, and others have declared their acceptance of the initiative and said that it represents a sound beginning for ending this unjust war and solving the Gulf issue peacefully and within the Arab framework.

The statement adds: By accepting the principle of withdrawal from Kuwait, Iraq has foiled all the excuses of some sides to declare their neutrality in this aggressive war or to remain in that devilish alliance.

Now that the facts have emerged so sharply, pinpointed the positions and ranks, revealed the trenches in this confrontation between the forces of evil and aggression and the forces defending the nation's dignity, culture, history, and religion, any attempt by any zealous Arab or Muslim who believes in God and cares about his sanctities to remain outside the battlefield can neither be comprehended nor accepted.

The statement calls on the peoples of the Arab and Islamic countries whose rulers have agreed to participate in the flagrant aggression to declare their anger and denunciation, as well as their rebellion against those rulers. It also urges the Islamic movements to lead their peoples at this historic stage, because not leading the peoples or providing a good example by paying the required price will be unacceptable, and the peoples, especially the Islamic movements, will pay a high price if the United States and the forces of tyranny and arrogance implement their plans in the region, may God forbid.

Peace Group Stages Sit-In Before Italian Embassy

NC2102040891 Amman PETRA JNA in Arabic 1605 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Amman, 20 Feb (PETRA)—The Italian international peace delegation staged a sit-in in front of the Italian Embassy in Amman this afternoon. They handed a message to the Italian ambassador in which they expressed solidarity with the fraternal Iraqi people and said they wanted the Gulf war to be settled through peaceful means. In their letter, they noted that they had recently arrived in Amman on their way to Baghdad to express solidarity with the Jordanian and Palestinian people and [words indistinct] will for peace. They stressed that the Italian people experienced not long ago the tragedies of war. They also strongly demanded a halt to this war of annihilation—in which Italian forces in the Gulf are participating under a fake cover and exceeding the UN Security Council resolutions. They called on the Italian ambassador in Amman to act as a true translator of the feelings of a large segment of the Italian public and Constitution, which condemns war as a means to solve problems among countries. They said that Italy should support peaceful and genuine solutions among people, and stresed the need for the Italian forces to withdraw from the Gulf. During their sit-in, they raised several placards expressing hope that the Gulf war would be halted and the United Nations make peace.

Palestinians March Demanding To Return Home

JN1902113091 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Feb 91 p 3

[Text] Amman (J.T.)—For the second time this month crowds of Palestinians prevented by the Israeli authorities from crossing into the occupied Arab territories staged a march in Amman to support their demand for the right to return home.

The Department of Palestinian Affairs at the Foreign Ministry says that around 5,000 Palestinians were barred

from entering the occupied territories and that 3,000 more are awaiting their turn to cross.

Most of the Palestinians seeking entry into their homeland have returned here from Kuwait and many of them are penniless, officials said.

The protesters marched from the Department of Palestine Affairs to the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and handed Werner Kasper [name as published], the head of the ICRC delegation here, a protest note demanding that bridges across the River Jordan be reopened for the returnees and urging various international organisations and governments to intervene on their behalf and ensure their right to return.

Ratib 'Amr, one of the department officials said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the Jordanian government was following the matter with the ICRC as well as other concerned organisations which in turn were taking up the issue with the Israeli authorities.

At least 30 Palestinians have now lost their residency permits, which means they cannot go back to the occupied lands. "Permits these Palestinians have been issued by the Israeli authorities upon leaving their homeland have expired and they simply cannot go back but the Jordanian government is taking up this matter seriously with the United Nations, said 'Amr. [no closing quotation mark as published]

The Palestinians earlier this month presented the ICRC with another note with similar demands, but as nothing was done in their case they decided to maintain their protests and continue their endeavours to return, officials said.

Late last month, Dr. Ahmad Qatanani, head of the Foreign Ministry's Department of Palestinian Affairs, said that the Israelis were allowing Palestinians to get out but very few are allowed to return, claiming security measures do not allow the Palestinians to return.

Normally, the Israelis allowed more than 1,000 persons to cross into West Bank every day by this time of the year, rising to more than 3,000 during the summer, but they have reduced the number to less than 50 during the Gulf war, Qatanani added.

The ban on Palestinian people's return coincides with a blanket curfew Israel has imposed on the 1.75 million Palestinians inside the occupied Arab territories.

Quoted by Petra, one of the protesters Monday said that the Israeli authorities have turned her back five times under the pretext that her three-month old baby did not have a temporary passport. But she said, when she acquired this passport the Israelis still did not want to allow her in.

The rest of the protesters, Petra said, held valid residency permits entitling them the right to be permanent residents of the occupied Arab territories.

1,500 Egyptians Cross to Al-Ruwayshid From Iraq

NC2002133191 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 20 Feb 91 p 1

[Text] Amman—A responsible source at the Foreign Ministry yesterday told AL-DUSTUR that approximately 1,500 Egyptians who were being held at the Tirbil border post on the Jordanian-Iraqi border have entered Jordan via al-Ruwayshid during the last two days.

The source added that authorities at the border have provided them with all facilities needed to resume their travel to their country in accordance with a plan drawn up for this purpose. These evacuees left for the port of al-'Aqabah.

The source also said that the delay at the border area was not caused by Jordan, because any person crossing our border is permitted to enter Jordan if he carries a visa, and if he needs no visa he is permitted to cross without any delay.

It is known that at the end of last January, the Iraqi Government asked Egyptians who wanted to leave Iraqi territory to obtain exit visas.

AL-DUSTUR asked the responsible source if the number of Jordanians coming from Baghdad and Kuwait has recently increased. The source said: "The numbers currently arriving at the border are small, because citizens fear aerial attacks on cars on the Iraqi-Jordanian highway."

Central Bank Receives EC Import Financing Aid

NC1802154691 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 18 Feb 91 p 1

[Text] Amman—The Central Bank of Jordan yesterday received 120 million European currency units, which is equivalent to $165 million. This sum represents 80 percent of the total aid the EC has decided to give Jordan to finance imports, on which an agreement was signed a few weeks ago.

The remaining amount is expected to be transferred to the country in the near future. This aid has significantly reinforced the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves.

Aid, Soft-Term EC Loans Total $1.15 Billion

JN1902105091 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Feb 91 p 3

[By staff reporter P.V. Vivekanand]

[Text] Amman—Jordan has received about $165 million from the European Community (EC)—as part of assistance to offset the losses the Kingdom suffered as a result of its adherence to international sanctions against Iraq.

The amount—equivalent to 120 million European Currency Units (ECUs)—represents 80 per cent of European

Commission grant allocated to Jordan for 1991. The relevant agreement was signed earlier this month.

"The rest of the pledged assistance will be released as soon as a major portion of the 120 ECUs is utilised," said Christian Falkowski, the delegate in Amman.

According to the aid agreement, the assistance could be used to finance imports of all commodities and equipment except luxury items and military ware by both private and public sectors from EC member states.

The Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has already received the cash transfer, CBJ officials said Monday.

The condition that the aid should be used only for imports from EC member states should not pose a problem for Jordan since 70 per cent of its imports come from the Community, economists noted.

Mr. Falkowski rejected suggestions in the media that the Community might follow the example of Washington and review its aid to the kingdom as "punishment" for what is perceived as Amman's support for Iraq in the Gulf war.

"Our assistance is extended to Jordan to compensate for its losses resulting from its observance of the sanctions against Iraq," he said. "There is no other consideration whatsoever. The aid is totally non-political."

Japan, another major donor to Jordan, has also affirmed that it has no intention to reconsider its aid and loan commitments to the Kingdom.

Mr. Falkowski and other Western diplomats have said that they were fully satisfied that Jordan was strictly abiding by the sanctions against Iraq, imposed in August following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

They also said that Europe is very keen in ensuring continued stability and security in Jordan.

"Jordan has always been a moderating factor in the Middle East and any serious harm to its economic stability would definitely have immediate consequences on the delicate political equilibrium in the region," according to a senior European diplomat.

The EC aid to Jordan comes as special financial assistance to make up for the Kingdom's losses as a result of its compliance with the sanction on Iraq, its major trading partner until the invasion.

European diplomats have also said that they understand Jordan's precarious economic position and expressed tacit approval of the Kingdom's oil imports from Iraq in lieu of Baghdad's debts to Amman.

Iraq's debts to Jordan stood at $310 million in August 1990, and Baghdad had been repaying $12 million in monthly instalments.

But Washington argues otherwise and is not willing to accept that the sanctions committee had okayed Jordan's oil imports from Iraq. And it was one of the initial reasons given by the Bush administration for repeated attacks on Jordanian oil tankers on the main Iraq-Jordan highway.

However, Washington's "review" of $55 million in aid to Jordan for fiscal year 1990-1991 came after Washington interpreted a speech by His Majesty King Husayn last week as an open declaration of support for Iraq.

Jordan has rejected this contention and said that its call for an end to the Gulf war and a peaceful resolution of the conflict did not indicate any shift from its firm position of neutrality.

With the receipt of the EC aid, the total assistance the Kingdom has received or been pledged in response to its request for compensation went up to $1.150 billion; this includes $700 million in soft-term loans from Japan, $235 million from Germany, $38 million from Italy, $23 million from Canada, $20 million from Framce, and $18 million from Netherlands.

Aid has also come from Sweden, Belgium, Denmark and Taiwan.

In the short term, external aid will be used to boost Jordan's foreign exchange reserves and help the country's balance of payments. But His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan has repeatedly said that long-term programmes should be in place by the year 1992 to address the Kingdom's basic economic problems.

Editorials View Soviet Plan for Gulf Peace

U.S. Rejection Criticized

NC2002135291 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 20 Feb 91 p 1

[Editorial: "America Rejects the Peace Option"]

[Text] It seems that the initiative the Soviet Union has launched to bring about peace in the Gulf region has clashed with the U.S., as indicated by the statements of U.S. officials, and in particular by President Bush, who yesterday described the initiative as falling short of the U.S. objectives that were defined before the war.

It also seems that the massive destructive shelling to which Baghdad was exposed the night before Bush received the Soviet proposals was tantamount to a clear U.S. response to the initiative. By its reckless shelling of the city of peace, the U.S. empire of evil expressed its untamed crusader desire to destroy all the capital's symbols of the new Arab awakening.

There is no doubt that the Iraqi leadership knew in advance that Washington would reject any peace plan as long as the Iraqi Army is safe and sound and able, at the same time, to threaten Israel, the spoiled strategic ally of the United States and the West's crusader states.

Hence, Baghdad dealt with the Soviet proposals very cleverly to expose the premeditated U.S. schemes against Iraq and to provide tangible proof for Tehran and Moscow that the U.S. aim goes far beyond the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution No. 660.

Therefore, no one was surprised by the United States' rejection of this initiative, because the rejection came from a state as large as the Soviet Union; because the initiative implies a Soviet desire to restore the important role Moscow previously played in Middle East issues; and because the initiative may put an end to the destruction of Iraq's economic infrastructure.

In light of this, we hope that both the Soviet Union and Iran will draw the right lessons from the arrogant and unjust U.S. position. We also hope that both countries will do what is required from them; namely, standing by Iraq in its glorious confrontation of the U.S. empire, supporting Iraq politically, materially, and morally, and providing Iraq with all factors and elements that will enable Iraq's brave Army to completely defeat the unjust U.S.-Zionist alliance.

Soviet Motives Examined

JN1902094091 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Feb 91 p 4

[Editorial: "Gorbachev's New Plan Can Make the Difference"]

[Text] Having held crucial and "constructive" talks in Moscow, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz and Deputy Prime Minister Sa'dun Hammadi went back to Baghdad yesterday carrying with them a Soviet plan for peace in the Gulf. The fact that the two Iraqi leaders have carried back to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn a definitive peace formula for the Gulf crisis suggests there is now room for guarded optimism that Baghdad's Friday announcement accepting U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 is bearing fruit after all. The direct involvement of President Mikhail Gorbachev in the search for a genuine peace process to resolve the Kuwaiti conflict signifies that Moscow not only views the situation with greater gravity now, but also shares with Iraq and Iran growing fears about continued Western military presence in the Gulf in the future.

There is little doubt that the Soviet Union has become more aware by the day of the implications of destroying Iraq and rendering it unstable. The geographical proximity of Iraq to the southern border of the Soviet Union, and the fact that most of southern republics in the country are already hotbeds for turmoil and secessionist movements that the West is accused of fomenting, must have prompted the Soviet leadership to move to contain what can be seen as a grand conspiracy being hatched by certain Western capitals. Besides, Moscow is fast running out of friends and allies in the world and when its southern flank becomes threatened by an unrestrained Western military and political presence, it has to act and promptly so. It can be assumed, and safely perhaps, that the package deal that President Mikhail Gorbachev has transferred to his Iraqi counterpart contains additional elements that provide opportunities for Moscow to act swiftly on protecting its strategic interests. The Soviet Union wants to stay in the big league and now is the time for it to show that it can still call some shots in the international arena. Accordingly Moscow would also seek a role for itself in tackling other disputes of the Middle East, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Soviet Union needs to score successes in its diplomacy and the Gulf crisis offers it a grand opportunity to do just that. It remains to be seen whether the Gorbachev plan is balanced enough for Iraq to accept it. We surely hope that this is where the missing link for peace in the Gulf will be found.

AL-RA'Y on Reasoning

NC2002142491 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 20 Feb 91 pp 1, 15

[Editorial: "The Soviet Move"]

[Text] The international community is pinning great hopes on Soviet efforts to halt the U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist aggression against Iraq and to prevent the outbreak of a ground war, whose number of victims can easily be estimated among the ranks of the alliance of aggression and the ranks of the Iraqis, who are defending their homeland, themselves, and their honor. The Soviet Union has realized that Iraq's agreement to deal with UN Security Council Resolution 660 indicates its sincere desire for peace as well as its rejection of a fierce ground confrontation, unless it is imposed on it. The Soviet Union has also realized that the allied forces' military machine has deviated from its objective and has begun a war of annihilation and destruction against the Iraqi people, their achievements and power.

The Soviet move is based on a number of facts, the most important of which are its responsibility, as a superpower, toward justice, peace, and its close friendly relations, which Iraq and Arab masses throughout the entire Arab homeland are eager to maintain. The move is also based on the Soviet belief that terminating the cold war by both superpowers does not mean spreading U.S. hegemony over the world and then striking at the Soviet Union itself.

Moscow approved Resolution 678 out of its eagerness to apply international legitimacy to all the regional and international disputes. The Soviet Union now realizes that the U.S. concept of the resolution means the imposition of the U.S. decision on that legitimacy. The United States has gone far beyond the goal defined by Resolution 678 and launched a terrorist war, in the full sense of the word, against children, women, economic and scientific achievements, and humanity's large treasure of historical sites in Iraq.

Because Europe has decided to be a party to this, the Soviet Union's political and moral responsibility makes it incumbent on it to move to halt this destructive war

and to assert to friendly Iraq and its Arab nation that Moscow is still eager to continue its close historical relations that are based on confidence and respect. The Soviet efforts, at this particular time, are a precious opportunity for Moscow to tell Washington that ending the cold war does not mean the beginning of U.S. hegemony over the whole world, including the Soviet Union—which was the principal party in efforts to formulate an end to the [cold war], and to resort to the United Nations and its charters and principles, not to Washington's plans, intentions, and arrogance.

Any Soviet success in halting the aggression against Iraq and beginning the search for a political settlement of the Gulf crisis and all the Middle East crises will be a victory for justice and peace and for the Arab nation and the Soviet peoples. It is clear now that the United States is using the Gulf crisis to strike at the Arab awakening and tighten the siege on the Soviet Union by curtailing the Soviet role and destroying its capabilities. This will not be easy because this state's move toward democracy, openness, and perestroyka does not mean acceptance of the U.S. policy, which Washington believes can be applied to all the big and small states in the world through its arrogance and racist behavior.

'Holy War' Urged Against Allies

NC1802213691 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 18 Feb 91 p 1

[Editorial: "Confronting International Terrorism With Holy War"]

[Text] The foreign ministers who recently gathered in Cairo concluded their "historic" meeting by announcing a set of "no's". They rejected the Kuwaiti people's return to their country, the Palestinian people's return to their homeland, and the return of displaced people from southern Lebanon and the Syrian [Golan] Heights to their cities and villages. If, by rejecting the Iraqi initiative, these ministers thought they would deal a "political blow" to fraternal Iraq, then they have forgotten that their rejection gave the Zionist enemy the legitimacy it has been seeking since 1967 in connection with its occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Syrian heights, and the legitimacy it has been seeking since 1982 in connection with its occupation of southern Lebanon.

James Baker yesterday noted his satisfaction with the stand that was adopted and announced in Cairo, expressing particular pride in and gratitude for the foreign ministers' nonmention of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Baker added: This means that the United States and its allies will deal with Palestinians inside [the occupied territories] after the Gulf war, as we begin to build the new world order. This is the very world order we have referred to more than once as the U.S. order. We also said that we believed that the ministers who met in Cairo would come up with an honest Arabic translation for this U.S. order, and this what happened.

What else can this mean but that the United States, the Egyptian regime, and the Zionist enemy will impose new Camp David accords on the region that will settle the Palestinian question and the Arab-Zionist conflict to oblivion in favor of U.S.-Israeli hegemony over the region and its Arab people and their wealth, aspirations, and dignity? What else can this mean but that the true objective of the war that is being waged against Iraq and against the achievements, children, and history of its people is not to raise the Kuwaiti flag over Kuwait, but to raise the Israeli flag over all Arab capitals?

In light of this fact, this war is not a U.S.-Atlantic-Zionist war against Iraq, but one against the entire homeland and the nation. The Arab masses' responsibility is not to support Iraq just with sentiments and love, but to support it with a holy jihad against all parties to the aggressive alliance. When a majority of the public in the United States, Britain, and France approves of the attack on the al-'Amiriyah shelter, the killing of civilians, and the destruction of their achievements, and when the Zionist enemy announces that the alliance is carrying out the mission it wants to defend itself and to continue to destroy Iraq, then it becomes clear that this war is systematic international terrorism that must be confronted and dealt with through a holy war that must extend to all Arab and Islamic arenas and target all that belongs to the Americans, the French, the British, the Italians, the Zionists, and any of their allies as long as they are bent on slaughtering us and as long as the Western capitals and some Arab capitals are not ashamed of announcing this and working to achieve this objective. If you will aid the cause of God, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly. [Koranic verse]

Army Deploys to Al-Ashrafiyah, Other Areas

NC2002160391 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1445 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] At 1400 today, units of the Lebanese Army began to deploy in the areas of al-Ashrafiyah, al-Nab'ah, and Burj Hammud within the framework of the greater Beirut security consolidation plan in implementation of the Council of Ministers decision. This was announced by the Defense Ministry.

Three Reported Hurt in Israeli Raid

NC2002122291 Paris AFP in English 1120 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Rashayya, Lebanon, Feb 20 (AFP)—Three people were hurt Wednesday when two Israeli fighter-bombers launched a missile attack on a Palestinian position in central Lebanon, regional security sources reported. In Israel a military spokesman confirmed the raid, describing the target as "a terrorist base in the al-Biqa' Valley...that has been used as a springboard for attacks on Israel."

He said the position had been destroyed and that all aircraft had returned safely from the mission. Security sources in Lebanon said the mid-morning attack with air-to-ground missiles was aimed at a facility held by the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in the village of Kamid al-Lawz.

The base was empty at the time of the raid, according to security sources, who put the casualty toll at three wounded, two Palestinian combatants and one Lebanese civilian. Abu-al-'Aynayn, PFLP spokesman in the region, said the attack "will not prevent the continuation of actions by armed Palestinians against Israel from southern Lebanon."

"The Palestinian struggle will intensify at a time when the people of Iraq are being massacred by the United States," he warned. Wednesday's strike was the fourth against southern Lebanon by Israel this year, three of which have targeted Palestinian bases.

Aircraft Crashes Over Al-Biqa', Pilots Killed

NC2002164991 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1445 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] The Ministry of National Defense has issued the following statement: At 1145 today, contact was lost with a military training plane of the (Windhoek) type, which was carrying out training sorties over the al-Biqa' area. It has been ascertained that the plane crashed near Shmistar. Its two pilots, captain Badi' Abu-Salih and captain Basim Sa'b, were martyred. A group of officers and experts under the Air Force commander is inspecting the crash area and carrying out the necessary investigations to pinpoint the circumstances and causes of the incident.

Staff Deputies, Brigade Commanders Appointed

NC2102101091 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] A presidential decree appointing four deputies to the Army chief of staff and another decree appointing the commanders of the Army brigades have been issued. The decrees were signed by President Ilyas al-Hirawi, Prime Minister 'Umar Karami, and Defense Minister Engineer Michel al-Murr.

The deputies to the chief of staff are: Staff Brigadier General Ilyas Khalil, deputy chief of staff for planning; Staff Brigadier General Husayn Nasr al-Din; deputy chief of staff for personnel; Staff Brigadier General Ghassan Jadd, deputy chief of staff for logistics; and Staff Brigadier General Salim al-Haj Sulayman, deputy chief of staff for operations.

The commanders of the Army brigades are: Brigadier General Joseph 'Assaf, commander of the support brigade; Staff Brigadier General Antonius Sawwan, commander of the 10th Airborne Infantry Brigade; Brigadier General Ahmad 'Id, commander of the medical brigade; Staff Colonel Anis Tubiya, commander of the 8th Infantry Brigade; Staff Colonel Wahbi Qatishah, commander of the 9th Infantry Brigade; Staff Colonel Michel Harruq, commander of the Republican Guard Brigade; Staff Colonel Suhayl Khuri, commander of the 5th Infantry Brigade; Staff Colonel 'Abdallah Dahir, commander of the 2d Infantry Brigade; Staff Colonel Ramzi Abu-Hamzah, commander of the 11th Infantry Brigade; Staff Colonel Ahmad Subra, commander of the 12th Infantry Brigade; Staff Colonel 'Isam 'Atwah, commander of the 6th Infantry Brigade; Staff Colonel Luciele Mikari, commander of the 7th Infantry Brigade; and Staff Colonel Ghassan Milhim, commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade.

Defense Minister Comments on Persian Gulf War

PM2002130091 Paris LE FIGARO in French 18 Feb 91 p6

[Interview with Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Talas by Claude Lorieux in Damascus—date not given]

[Text] Damascus—"When Tariq 'Aziz meets Gorbachev, the Soviet president will talk to him in very severe terms on the vital need to withdraw Iraqi forces from Kuwait": General Mustafa Talas, Syrian defense minister and an old comrade in arms of President Hafiz al-Asad, has no doubt about that.

Of course, after an initial reading, the Soviets described Baghdad's conditional offer of withdrawal on Friday as "encouraging." The general, who is also deputy prime minister, added: "Anyone who reads between the lines can see that it is a trick and that Saddam Husayn is not sincere. The Soviets will discover the conditions set. They will say that it is not encouraging." The general admitted that the Kremlin "wants to act as mediator." "But Saddam discourages all those who ask him to make concessions."

What if the land war starts? "It will not last long," the defense minister replied, regretting that the operations have been conducted since 17 January according to the rules of U.S. military doctrine rather than according to those of Soviet doctrine. Mustafa Talas, who was in Moscow just a week ago, explained: "If the Soviet doctrine had been followed, the general staff would have engaged the ground units after three hours of bombing and with a simultaneous air bombardment. The Americans are counting primarily on air strength. I prefer the Soviet doctrine."

Damascus has announced that the 18,000 Syrian soldiers sent to the Gulf are there to defend Saudi territory, not to attack Iraq. Is this a tenable position? The general clammed up whenever he was asked a purely military question: "When the war begins, you will discover the truth!"

This cavalry officer, who is something of a francophile and a bon vivant, could not help regretting, during this informal conversation with LE FIGARO, that the Arab forces were not allowed to settle Saddam Husayn's score alone: "The Western countries overestimated his strength. Combined with those of Saudi Arabia, our forces could defeat Iraq. But King Fahd preferred to avoid the battle. He tried the path of cooperation and coalition."

Could Iran change course and support Iraq? "Never," Gen. Talas replied. "It is not in their interests, every Iranian family has one martyr killed in the eight years of war with Iraq. By sending his planes to Iran, Saddam acted out of fear of seeing the pilots revolt against him. Do not forget that he executed the head of his Air Force. He also tried to draw the Iranians into the war. But they were reasonable. They did not agree to go along with him."

It has often been said that Iraq was Syria's "strategic hinterland" against Israel and that its collapse was likely to deal a blow to the Arab defense system. The Syrian deputy prime minister replied: "The Syrian, Jordanian, Iraqi, and even Saudi Armies must form the eastern front. But, to avoid fighting Israel, Saddam Husayn engaged the battle in the east. If he wanted to liberated Palestine he should not have attacked Iran. If he wanted to attack Palestine [as published], he should not have attacked Kuwait. If he wanted to attack Palestine [as published] he should not have attacked Syria."

Nothing Irreversible Between Damascus and Paris

"Saddam," he said, "is the Hitler of our times." He recalled that in 1979, 40 days after the visit to Baghdad of another Syrian delegation, Saddam Husayn, who had become president, had "invented a plot" and eliminated prominent figures in the regime who "had shaken our hands" a few weeks earlier.

The general added: "The truth is that the Western policy requires that relations between Syria and Iraq be bad. If the two peoples, who are in fact just one, unite, the Western countries would be very worried. We are still suffering the consequences of the Sykes-Picot agreement (concluded between London and Paris after World War I)."

The defense minister has just returned from the USSR. According to SANA, the Syrian press agency, there were discussions on "modernizing Syria's defense capabilities." The deputy prime minister did not reveal anything more than that. Nor did he say whether Damascus had revised its doctrine of "strategic parity" which al-Asad wanted to construct against Israel. In the past, the Soviets have asked him to do so, stressing that to do so was a realistic course of action.

Relations between 'Arafat and al-Asad have been cool for more than seven years. Talas condemned him: "His big mistake is to have put all his eggs in Saddam's basket. He was guided by his feelings. He supports anything which is hostile to Syria."

The deputy prime minister is not pessimistic about the future of relations with France. "It is impossible to link all our problems to the General 'Awn affair. If it had been up to me alone, I would have told him to leave and go to the devil from the first day. 'Awn is a big liar. He held Israel with his right hand, Iraq with his left, and turned his back on Damascus. But President Mitterrand is capable of admitting that he was wrong and adjusting his policy. The Pope himself now supports al-Ta'if and the policy of the new Lebanon."

Is France not likely to cut itself off from part of the Arab world by military involvement in the war? According to the defense minister of Syria, another member of the anti-Saddam alliance, "the risks exists, but temporarily.

When, after the liberation of Kuwait, the international community, including the USSR, Europe, and especially France, tries to focus efforts to settle the Israeli-Arab conflict, I think that all those risks will disappear. France will regain its credibility."

Iraq's 'Last Chance' Lies in Immediate Withdrawal

NC2102111191 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0920 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Excerpt] Damascus, 21 Feb (SANA)—In its editorial today entitled "The Last Chance," AL-THAWRAH affirms that the next few hours will be decisive with regard to the course of events and developments of the current Gulf crisis. The paper adds that the Iraqi regime and its president have no choice but to hasten to announce the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and to start this withdrawal on the ground immediately.

The paper says that the key to ending the Gulf war, from whose crimes the Zionist enemy first benefited, is in the hands of the Iraqi regime and the Iraqi ruler. Consequently, they bear the responsibility for ending the catastrophic debacle being experienced by the Iraqi and Kuwaiti peoples and all countries of the region, the paper says.

Concluding its editorial, AL-THAWRAH says that if the Iraqi regime fails to respond favorably to the Soviet initiative, no one can assess the gravity of the horrors that will ensue or the seriousness of the dangers that will be posed to Iraq and Kuwait in particular and to the region and the whole world in general. [passage omitted]

Sudan's Al-Bashir Arrives, Talks With Al-Asad

NC2102034491 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Excerpts] General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, chairman of the Sudanese National Salvation Revolution Command Council, arrived in Damascus at 1900 today on a visit to Syria. President Hafiz al-Asad was at the head of those who were present at Damascus international airport to welcome him. [passage omitted]

Gen. 'Umar al-Bashir is accompanied by an official delegation comprised of 'Ali Sahlul, foreign minister; Mahdi Ibrahim, political committee adviser; and 'Uthman al-Nafi', director of the Arab Homeland Department in the Sudanese Foreign Ministry.

His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad and Gen. 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir held a meeting in Tishrin Palace. The meeting was attended for Syria by 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, vice presidents; Mahmud al-Zu'bi, prime minister; Faruq al-Shar', foreign minister; and Muhammad al-Mahamid, Syrian ambassador to Sudan. For Sudan, the meeting was attended by the members of the delegation accompanying Gen. 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir and the Sudanese ambasador in Damascus.

[Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic at 2100 GMT on 20 February reports the following text of a cable Gen. al-Bashir sent to President Husni Mubarak while crossing Egyptian airspace en route to Syria: "I extend my warmest greetings and wishes of happiness and good health to the brothers in the north of the Valley, coupled with my wishes for further progress and prosperity."]

Discusses Gulf, Region With Al-Asad

NC2102085391 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Excerpts] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad and General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir held a meeting at Tishrin Palace upon the arrival of Gen. al-Bashir in Damascus yesterday evening. [passage omitted]

The talks dealt with the regional situation and the Gulf crisis. [passage omitted]

Iraqi Refugees Arrive in Al-Hasakah 18 Feb

NC1802204491 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 18 Feb 91

[Text] A new batch of brother Iraqi refugees crossed to the al-Hawl camp in al-Hasakah Province this evening to escape the catastrophe that has befallen Iraq. A SANA correspondent said that the refugees praised the outstanding concern and care accorded them by the local authorities and the UN organization.

The refugees said that the Iraqi people are going through a frightening time as a result of the Iraqi regime's insistence on occupying Kuwait and causing the Gulf crisis.

Say 'Confusion' Prevails in Iraq

NC2102015091 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2115 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Al-Hasakah—A new group of war refugees crossed the Iraqi-Syrian border this evening. They arrived at a camp for war refugees in the area of al-Hawl in al-Hasakah, and were received by the committees set up for this purpose, which provided them with the facilities and services needed for temporary residence.

A number of the war refugees told the SANA correspondent in al-Hasakah that the Iraqi people are suffering from displacement as a result of the war there and the confusion that prevails in the country. They expressed the hope that the war will be over soon to save the people and resources of Iraq.

Other war refugees said that shortages have led to a decline in health and has left the country in shambles. The war refugees were relieved because they are now in Syria. They also hoped the ordeal the Iraqi people are suffering will end.

India

President Accepts Resignations of Five Ministers

BK2102052891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0435 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] The president, Mr. Ramaswamy Venkataraman, has accepted the resignations of five ministers from the Union Council of Ministers. According to a Rashtrapati Bhawan [President's House] communique, the step has been taken on the advice of the prime minister. Mr. Chandra Shekhar last night sent to the president the resignation letters of the ministers, Mr. Vidhya Charan Shukla and Mr. Shakilur Rahman, both of cabinet rank; and Mr. Bhagya Gowardhan, Mr. Sarwar Hussain, and Mr. Basevraj Patil, all ministers of state. These ministers had earlier submitted their resignations to the prime minister following their disqualification from the membership of the Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha speaker, Mr. Rabi Ray, had disqualified them and three others under the antidefection law on 11 January.

President Addresses Joint Parliament Session

BK2102110791 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] The president has asked people and parliamentarians to set aside all differences and unitedly face the great stress and challenge confronting the country. Mr. Venkataraman was adressing the joint sitting of the two houses of parliament on the opening day of the budget session today. He observed that communal and fissiparous elements pose a menace to the nation and the unity and integrity of the country are under severe threat. Inflation and adverse balance of payments position aggravated by the Gulf crisis have made the economic situation difficult. We must, the president emphasized, rise beyond petty squabbles and all that is narrow, selfish, and divisive to meet the challenges.

The opposition National Front, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], and the left parties boycotted the address. The president arrived in state in central hall of parliament a little before 1100 escorted by the chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma; the Lok Sabha speaker, Mr. Rabi Ray; and the prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar.

AIR [All India Radio] parliamentary correspondent reports that about a third of the seats in the hall were empty following the opposition boycott and the lone Lok Dal member from the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Ram Avdhesh Singh, walked out in the middle of the president's address, demanding implementation of the Mandal Commission report.

Expressing concern over the deteriorating law and order situation, the president reaffirmed the government's commitment to finding acceptable solutions to problems in Punjab, Kashmir, and Assam within the framework of the Constitution. He regretted that the erstwhile DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazagham] government in Tamil Nadu failed to control the unlawful activities of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] and maintain public order, necessitating president's rule. The center, he said, is keen to restore popular rule in the state at the earliest.

Mr. Venkataraman said that hard options need to be applied to retrieve the present fiscal imbalances. These cannot be corrected overnight all by a single stroke of action. He, however, assured people that the situation, though grim, need not cause any panic. Timely action and contingency plan by the government have enabled the country to meet the fallout of the Gulf crisis. The stocks of petroleum and foodstuffs are at a satisfactory level. The president made it clear that while conserving oil, the requirements of the agricultural sector will never be overlooked. To maximize exports, big industrial houses will be required to share major responsibility.

During his speech covering all aspects of national life, the president announced that a statement on industrial policy will be placed before parliament in the current session. The agricultural policy resolution is also expected. The eighth plan document, Mr. Venkataraman said, will be finalized next month. Its main thrust will be on removal of poverty, generation of employment, and provision of basic amenities to the people. He disclosed that a 10-year national forestry action plan has been prepared to involve people in protecting the environment.

Gandhi Warns Against Giving Up National Interests

BK2002131491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] The Congress-I president, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, has warned against surrendering national interests and the country's age-old traditions for procuring some economic benefit. He was addressing the state presidents of the Indian Youth Congress-I in New Delhi today. Mr. Gandhi referred to the Gulf situation and said that India cannot be trapped by a particular world group who has hijacked the United Nations and is attempting to dictate terms to us. He said the unprecedented economic crisis faced by the country is the result of the mismanagement by the previous Janata Dal government.

Congress-I Not To Let Shekhar Government Fall

BK1902155491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 19 Feb 91

[Text] The Congress-I says it stands by its assurance that it will not let the Chandra Shekhar government fall on account of a vote in the Lok Sabha. Addressing a news conference after the Congress-I Working Committee [CWC] meeting in New Delhi today, the party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, said the party has conveyed to the Janata Dal-S that floor management is going

to be crucial in the forthcoming Parliament session. Mr. Gadgil said that the Congress-I will ensure that all its members are present in the house and the ruling party will have to see to the rest.

The CWC meeting presided over by the party president, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, in its assessment of the economic situation described it as very grim. The party urged the government to take the nation into confidence and tell the people the reality of the economic situation before asking them to make sacrifices. The spokesman said this is necessary as during the current financial year, about 5,900 crore rupees are being raised by increased taxes and administered prices.

The deputy prime minister, Mr. Devi Lal, has said that the Chandra Shekhar government does not face any threat now as the Congress-I has decided to continue its support to the government. Talking to PTI [PRESS TRUST OF INDIA] Bhasha [language service] in New Delhi today, he said all political parties, excluding the Bharatiya Janata Party, should join hands to provide a stable government at the center. He said nobody wants elections now.

Nonaligned Team To Go to Baghdad 24 Feb

BK2002163891 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1600 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Another [Gulf] peace initiative is now taking shape. This time it is coming from the nonaligned countries. Foreign ministers of four NAM [Nonaligned Movement] nations, including India, will be going to Baghdad on Sunday [24 February] to submit a peace proposal to Saddam Husayn. The foreign ministers are expected to assemble in Tehran on Saturday and proceed to Baghdad by road the next day.

The Yugoslav foreign minister, Mr. Budimir Loncar, called [External Affairs Minister] Mr. Shukla on the phone this afternoon and conveyed the details of the Baghdad visit.

Editorial Views Soviet Statements on Gulf War

BK2002133291 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 7 Feb 91 p 11

[Editorial: "No Longer a Super Power"]

[Text] The statements made by Soviet spokesmen that the Gulf war is going out of hand, and that the US-led forces are exceeding the UN mandate by causing civilian destruction seem to offer the first indications that Moscow has begun to feel uneasy about its position over the West Asian crisis. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Belonogov has flown into Tehran for talks with Iranian leaders. The international affairs committee of the Soviet Parliament has set the nature of his mission by noting that the threat of war's escalation, fraught with unpredictable consequences, provokes serious concern. The Soviet concern is not unreal, but Moscow was deceiving itself if it assumed that it was in no position to anticipate the turn the Gulf war might take. If it has finally decided to shed its low profile, and do something—say be together with Iran—it may be from a calculation that the US is close to getting stuck in the West Asian conflict. It is becoming increasingly clear that in any post-war search for a stable order in the region, Iran would command some influence since the other major actors, such as Egypt, Syria and the Emirates of the Gulf have shown themselves as partisan against Iraq. Perhaps an attempt is being made to evolve an Iran-Soviet axis as a key factor for any Gulf settlement.

The marginal Soviet role in the Gulf so far may be interpreted as issuing from several factors. The most likely one is its keenness not to undo the good relations it has begun to build with the United States. Detente is a sine qua non for the success of perestroyka and glasnost. This, in turn, is a prerequisite for the survival of the present Soviet leadership. As it is, the West does not think Moscow has changed enough to merit a rush of its capital and technology. A new complicating factor for Mr. Gorbachev is the situation in the Baltic, and the West's disapproval of the stern methods Moscow has applied to meet the situation. It is possible the Soviet Union and the West have made some kind of a trade-off over the Baltic and Gulf crises. However, the desire not to rub Washington on the wrong side may not have been the only reason why Moscow has treated the Gulf with caution. Mr Gorbachev knew how weak has become the Soviet Union and chose to do what made popular in the West, nodding at the United Nations, and possibly expressing—mildly—some reservations here and there as the events led to the Gulf war. It would now seem that the course the conflict has taken can only weaken Washington's diplomatic position in the region, which offers Moscow an opportunity to step in and balance the West's might in controlling the world's major oil resources and enhance its clout with Arabs. By pointing out Iraq's obduracy, Moscow is careful not to give Washington cause for objection. Moscow and Tehran both seem to be trying to reap the benefits of the Gulf war without firing a single bullet. May be Moscow is trying to convert its weakness and consequent inaction on the Gulf into an advantage that ultimately may or may not be there. The Gulf conflict has, however, made Moscow discover that it is no longer a super power.

Turkey's Assembly Speaker Meets Prime Minister

TA2002223291 Ankara Domestic Service in Turkish 1100 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Kaya Erdem, speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, who is on an official visit to India, is continuing to hold contacts. He met with Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar in New Delhi. Turkish Radio and Television [TRT] correspondent Burhan Ozdemir reports that they discussed the latest developments in the Gulf war as well as bilateral relations.

In a statement to TRT after the meeting, Kaya Erdem said that the Indian prime minister expressed his regret over the extension of the Gulf war. Erdem added that the Indian prime minister agreed that there are no political or economic problems between Turkey and India and both expressed the hope that bilateral relations will develop.

Indigenous Nuclear Reactor Design in Final Stage

BK2002085691 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] The Bhabha Atomic Research Center—BARC—in Bombay is in the final stages of designing an atomic reactor based on a totally indigenous concept. Named as advanced heavy water reactor, it will be cheaper to build and operate. This has been stated by the chairman of BARC, Dr. P.K. Iyengar, in an article published in CURRENT SCIENCE. The new reactor will use thorium, which is abundantly available in the country, as fuel and ordinary light water as coolant.

Iran

Iraq's Hammadi Visits on Return From PRC 21 Feb

Welcomes Nonaligned Efforts

LD2102110891 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Manuchehr Motaki, our country's vice minister of foreign affairs in charge of international affairs, seeing off Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Sa'dun Hammadi this morning, had talks with him on the proceedings of the meeting held by the foreign ministers of four member states of the Nonaligned Movement in Tehran. They had talks with Iraqi officials with a view to finding a peaceful method of ending the Persian Gulf war. Sa'dun Hammadi welcomed the efforts of the Nonaligned Movement and declared Iraq's readiness to talk with the group formed at the recent meeting in Belgrade.

It should be recalled that the first group formed at the Belgrade meeting consists of the foreign ministers of Yugoslavia, Iran, India, and Cuba. They are to meet with Iraqi officials early next week to discuss ways and means of bringing the war to an end, following the one-day session they held in Tehran to coordinate matters.

Departs for Baghdad

LD2102085691 Tehran IRNA in English 0850 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA—Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Sa'dun Hammadi left here Thursday morning after a stopover in Tehran on his way home from China.

Hammadi arrived here Wednesday night from Beijing where he held talks with Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng and discussed Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's proposal for ending the Persian Gulf War.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Hosts Assembly of Experts

LD2102112991 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, president of the Republic, hosted a dinner reception last night in honor of the members of the Assembly of Experts of Leadership [as heard]. The president offered his congratulations on the anniversary of the birth of His Holiness Imam Hoseyn, His Holiness Imam Sajjad, and His Holiness 'Abol Fadl-al-'Abbas [early Islamic holy men], and then analyzed the latest developments regarding the critical situation in the Persian Gulf and efforts by the Islamic Republic.

Expressing regret for the massive loss of life and property which Muslims have suffered as a result of the current war in the region, he emphasized the decision of the Islamic Republic of Iran aimed at further efforts to bring the war to an end.

Meanwhile, on domestic issues Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani said that, thank God, in the field of economics a correct trend has been adopted and the country is progressing toward economic adjustment. He expressed the hope that through efforts by all officials and the people, especially the ulema and clerics, additional positive steps will be adopted toward bringing well-being and providing for the needs of the country.

At the meeting, Ayatolla Mehskini, president of the Assembly of Experts, referred to sayings by his holiness the honorable Prophet, God's peace be upon him, and offered some guidance.

Khamene'i Briefs Assembly

LD2002205991 Tehran IRIB Television Network in Persian 1600 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Excerpts] At the end of the one-day session of the second term of the Assembly of Experts, members of the assembly were this afternoon received by His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the leader of the Islamic revolution.

In the meeting His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i hoped that the Assembly of Experts will be able to continue to take strides on the clear path of Islam and revolution, guided by the special blessings of the lord of the age [the hidden Shiite 12th imam], may God hasten his honorable appearance. He then said: The gathering of such an impressive assembly of ulema and personalities, who have been effective in the overall movement of the Iranian nation and have acceptable revolutionary and scientific credentials, gives assurance to people to believe that the stability and survival of their Islamic regime will have been guaranteed. [passage omitted]

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i said that support for the country's caring and revolutionary officials is one of the basic duties of the people in all strata of the society. He said: Unconditional support and protection for all

the officials of the country, especially the officials in the executive branch and in particular the honorable president of the Republic who has devoted himself to the country and the nation, ranks as an important duty. At this sensitive juncture in time the government and the country's officials must not feel that they are left alone.

Stressing that the fundamental enemies of the Islamic revolution, harboring well-known motives, are bent on driving a wedge between the people and the officials, the leader of the Islamic revolution said: Friendly and brotherly reminders or criticism do not imply a lack of support. However, raising unfounded issues, engaging in attacks on officials, and hurling accusations against them rank as treason no matter from whom these originate. Today, the presidents of the Republic, the Government, the Judiciary, and the Islamic Consultative Majles are in need of support and emotional bonds with the people more than ever before. Therefore, mass support as well as maintaining the existing bonds between the officials and the people will be a religious imperative [taklif] and a duty. [passage omitted]

At the end of his remarks His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i referred to the way the elections to the second term of the Assembly of Experts were held, saying: The honor and spiritual status of those who did not make it to the Assembly of Experts will remain intact. That [failing to be elected to the Assembly] is not an indication of the lack qualification on their part. Rather, many of them have high qualifications and are busy to make efforts on the path of God. They have been present at the various stages of the revolution and will continue to be present. [passage omitted]

Grenades Thrown at UK, Italian, Turkish Embassies

LD2002184691 Tehran IRNA in English 1825 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 20, IRNA—Concussion grenades were thrown at the embassies of Britain, Italy and Turkey in Tehran around 20:00 hours local time (16:30 GMT) Wednesday.

According to preliminary reports, the attacks caused no damage.

Further information on the issue was not available.

Islamic Jihad Claims Responsibility

NC2102081991 Paris AFP in English 0744 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Tehran, Feb 21 (AFP)—An anonymous caller claimed the Islamic Jihad Organization was responsible for Wednesday's grenade attacks on the British, Italian and Turkish embassies here, the newspaper Islamic Republic [JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI] said Thursday.

The newspaper said a person claiming to represent the group's "Tehran section" threatened that "attacks will continue against nationals of aggressor countries if the West's terrorist attacks on the defenseless people of Iraq do not stop".

The attacks, which caused light damage but no casualties, were the first of their kind to take place in Iran against members or interests of countries belonging to the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq in the Gulf war.

Italy, Japan, FRG Send Messages to President

Andreotti's Message

LD2002203691 Tehran in English to Europe 1930 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti has explained his country's position toward the Moscow peace effort in separate letters to the presidents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Soviet Union, and the United States.

The Italian prime minister's spokesman, in a news conference in Rome today, announced that the Italian Government supports Mr Gorbachev's initiative for establishing a cease-fire. He also said that in this regard Mr Andreotti has sent letters to the leaders of the three countries mentioned.

Quoting the Italian prime minister, he said that Moscow's initiative is in accordance with the UN resolutions which include an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

Kaifu's Message

LD2002222391 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Mr. Toshiki Kaifu, the Japanese prime minister, in a message submitted by that country's ambassador in Iran to Mr. Borujerdi, our country's deputy foreign minister in charge of Asian and Pacific affairs, termed as very positive the efforts of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani for resolving the Persian Gulf crisis, and called on the government of the Islamic Republic to continue its efforts in that regard.

In that message, Mr. Kaifu termed Saddam's decision for the unconditional withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwait as the first condition for resolving the crisis. He stressed: The Islamic Republic of Iran can play the most appropriate role in that direction.

Weizsaecker's Message

LD2102083391 Tehran IRNA in English 0609 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 21, IRNA—German President Richard von Weizsaecker sent a message to President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on the volatile Persian Gulf situation, a report said here Wednesday.

The message was handed over to Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati during his three-day visit to Bonn which ended Wednesday.

In line with Iran's efforts to bring an immediate end to the Persian Gulf crisis, the Islamic Republic of Iran informed Iraq of the content of the message due to its importance and urgency.

Kharrazi Says Peacemaking Efforts To Continue

LD2102104191 Tehran IRNA in English 0807 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] United Nations, New York, Feb. 21, IRNA—Iran's Permanent U.N. Representative Kamal Kharrazi here Wednesday briefed U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar on a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday between Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq 'Aziz and President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

Kharrazi also assured the U.N. secretary general of Iran's commitment to peace-making efforts, saying that the Islamic Republic would do everything to persuade Iraq to pull out from Kuwait. He said Iran is opposed to the interference of foreign powers in the Persian Gulf and to the security plans of the foreign governments for the Persian Gulf.

The Iranian envoy to the United Nations also presented a fact-finding report of the Iranian chapter of the International Red Crescent society in a visit to Baghdad which indicates sub-standard health services as well as food and medical insufficiencies in Iraq as a result of the current war in that country.

The U.N. secretary general noted that Iraq's pull-out from Kuwait is the only way for halting the war and for preventing human and material losses in Iraq and Kuwait.

KEYHAN Urges Iraq To 'Hold Out'

LD2002171991 Tehran IRNA in English 1655 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Tehran, Feb 20, IRNA—The Persian daily KEYHAN in a commentary Wednesday said that if Iraq should choose to surrender to the United States under the present circumstances it will have paved the way for a supercilious show of power by the U.S. It said because Iraq has thus far held out in the war it would do better to try to hold out in the upcoming phase of the war because it is likely that the coalition against Iraq will prove vulnerable in the course of a ground battle.

The daily said under the present conditions the United States would not agree to any precondition by Iraq for calling a halt to the war. Iraq's plan for withdrawal from Kuwait will benefit the Iraqi Government to the extent that it will not entail the shattering of the morale of its army, it said.

"To divide the rank of the multinational forces would take still longer depending solely on how long Iraq will hold out. The United States is trying its hardest to shout a 'hands up' before entering a ground war in which case the projected realization of the American doctrine of 'the new order' will be considered as having been a fait accompli. The Russians, too, try to show off their peacemaking capacity to the world even though at the cost of humiliating Iraq.

"In the midst of the developments, the Soviets pursue a multi-faceted goal because: a. at least one front of the ruling system in the Soviet Union is displeased with [the] Kremlin's approach to the Persian Gulf crisis, and is trying to keep a leverage in a future Iraq. b. The Soviets fancy that their influence in the current crisis is capable of playing a potentially big role on the developments at home. c. they believe they can win the approval of this or that front in Europe. d. They wish to see the present government in Iraq hold out intact.

"Despite what the Soviets looked up to they did not get the opportunity to capitalize on the war in the Persian Gulf, and there are indications that they will not be in a position to do so in the future. Therefore, it is time for Iraq to exercise good judgement. If Iraq has managed to hold out perfectly well, which it claims to have, naturally its resistance in the forthcoming phase which tests also the vulnerability of the coalition as one likelihood can be crucial. "The region is experiencing a hard time. The Americans are openly claiming that because they are militarily superior they can impose their own view for the so-called new order. If Iraq should surrender under the present circumstances it will have paved the way for the supercilious show-off of power for the Americans which is against the preference of the public conscience of the people of the region."

Commentary on EC-Tehran 'Common Position'

LD2002133491 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1105 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Excerpts] Dr. Velayati, our country's foreign minister who is on an official visit to Germany, met and had talks with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. [passage omitted]

In the course of the Iranian delegations visit to Germany, alongside bilateral issues which are important in themselves, reviewing the ongoing Persian Gulf crisis and war against Iraq is of particular importance.

In these talks, Iran's position based on the point that security in the Persian Gulf cannot be established by foreign countries and, also, the need to safeguard the independence and territorial integrity of Iraq, was reemphasized. This position met with a positive response by German officials in such a way that the German chancellor, while expressing appreciation for efforts made by Iran to solve the Persian Gulf crisis, said that he was of

the same opinion as Iran in that the dismemberment of Iraq and threats to its territory is a danger to the future of the region.

During the bilateral talks of the two countries' foreign ministers, Genscher, the German foreign minister, said: Germany believes, just like Iran, that security in the Persian Gulf region should be safeguarded by the countries of the region themselves.

Mr. Velayati's visit to Bonn is taking place when, in the past few days, he has also held concentrated talks with the Soviet president and the Italian prime minister; and today, French and Iranian officials are due to hold discussions.

Iran is seeking a peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf crisis and to this end it has undertaken some initiatives and has had many diplomatic contacts. Iran, in spite of adopting a neutral position, is extremely concerned about the existing state of affairs in the region and a war which is being led by America.

While America claims that it is fighting to carry out the UN Security Council resolutions, it is overlooking the regional nation's rights to self-determination and is blatantly putting forward plans for the future and seeking to make the necessary arrangements.

Iran is a large and powerful country which has vital resources and extensive concerns in the Persian Gulf and has, during the past years—under the hardest of circumstances—demonstrated its seriousness and determination to safeguard these interests. These considerations, alongside the European Community's concerns about America's domination of the region's oil resources, has, whether one likes it or not, resulted in Iran and the EC sharing a common position. It is to be expected that this trend may widen in the future.

Commentary on U.S., European Views of Peace Plan

LD2002143391 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1110 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] At a time when Bush has implicitly rejected the Soviet peace plan for resolving the crisis, and while Britain does not believe that the plan meets the requirements of the Security Council resolution, other European countries are hoping that the plan's success will avert a ground war and its consequences.

The course of developments in the crisis until shortly after the start of the air battle against Iraq demonstrated an unprecedented coordination among the rivals of the cold war era and former American and European allies. But now the United States determination to push ahead with its military solution to reach some objectives beyond the Security Council resolution has increased concern of the Soviet Union and some Western allies of the United States, and it seems that the U.S. command of the military coalition against Iraq is facing a major problem. Before the revelation of Bush's plan to remove Saddam Husayn, the president of Iraq, from power, America's allies did not feel that their long-term interests were threatened; however, Washington's perseverance on this issue has forced the Europeans to evaluate their position in the face of the U.S. plan to take full charge of the Arab states after termination of the Persian Gulf war. It appears, therefore, that for the same reason the European countries are in favor of the Soviet plan.

Yesterday, German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher referred to the Soviet proposal to the president of Iraq as a last hope worthy of receiving overall support; and he said that the reason for his support was that this plan is in line with the UN resolutions which demand an unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. It is also said that Gorbachev, before sending his peace proposal to Saddam Husayn, had consulted European leaders and reached harmony on positions similar to the one announced by Germany. Other European countries, including France, are thus expected to follow Germany's example. The EC is in favor of the Soviet plan; and the Iraqi president's reply to Gorbachev's peace proposal, which Tariq 'Aziz is supposed to take back to Moscow today, would lead to further disagreement between America and its allies, should his reply strengthen the Soviet peace plan.

A resounding U.S. military victory in the war would not only have a destiny-making effect on the future shape of the region, but it would also strengthen the wing of the U.S. ruling system which is in favor of military solutions to world problems. Such a success would once again bring back the arms race at the global level, and each side would seek to impose its own solution by resorting to ruthless methods and destructive measures. Lack of understanding between Europe and America would also harm the atmosphere of harmony, which in the opinion of political experts, has reached the fruition stage.

It is possible that the as yet undisclosed Soviet plan has been compiled by observing certain considerations so as to make it effective at the current juncture in altering the course of the U.S. war-mongering policies, but if the United States were to remain determined to eliminate Saddam and to pursue the Iraqi army inside its own territory, the Soviet Union and Europe would become highly anxious vis-a-vis the strengthening of the U.S. position in the region.

In conclusion, it is worth noting the analysis made by some experts in the regional affairs to the effect that if Iraq were to accept the Moscow plan to withdraw from Kuwait unconditionally, Gorbachev's proposal—despite its positive points—shows a weakness, and that is, the date of withdrawal of the multinational forces from the Persian Gulf region is not clarified.

Government Ready To Sell Arms to RSA Opponents

LD2002190191 Tehran IRIB Television Network in Persian 1600 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] During the last round of talks between the Zambian defense minister and his accompanying delegation and our country's minister for defense and support of the armed forces, held this afternoon, Mr. Torkan referred to the Islamic Republic of Iran's support for the regimes opposing the racist policies of the Republic of South Africa [RSA], noting: We are ready to provide the military needs of those countries, at the lowest possible prices, within the framework of agreements which would be reached between the relevant countries' experts.

The Zambian defense minister also expressed thanks for the hospitality and the friendly reception of our country's officials. He said: During my stay in your country we were very much moved because your revolution has not relied on making speeches, but has taken action. I am sure that Zambia can learn much from you. Defense is a very important issue, and we wish to entrust our problems to capable friends.

Pakistan

Army Chief To Visit Troops in Saudi Arabia

BK1902100991 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 19 Feb 91 p 1

[Text] Rawalpindi, Feb. 18—General Mirza Aslam Beg, chief of the Army Staff, left here this evening for Karachi en route to Saudi Arabia to visit Pakistani troops stationed there at different places.

Saudis Gives $10 Million Additional Quake Relief

BK2102023091 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Saudi Arabia has given $10 million more for relief work in quake-hit areas of Pakistan. According to a Saudi Embassy press release in Islamabad, a check for this amount has been given to the Pakistani Embassy in Riyadh.

Three Killed in Bomb, Rocket 'Terrorist Attacks'

BK2002153191 Hong Kong AFP in English 0714 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] Lahore, Pakistan, Feb 20 (AFP)—Three people were killed and six wounded when a bomb exploded near a school in Pakistan's northwestern town of Gujrat, local reports said Wednesday.

The device, which had been placed under the seat of a vehicle, exploded Tuesday near a cinema and a mission school, the reports said. Two of those injured were said to be in serious condition.

Meanwhile in Peshawar, near the Afghan border, a rocket was fired Tuesday at a Pakistan state oil depot. It struck a wall and no one was injured, police said.

The two explosions bring to nine the number of terrorist attacks in Pakistan since the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf, although authorities have yet to establish any link between the attacks and the month-old war.

Gujrat is about 100 kilometers (60 miles) north of Lahore, in Punjab province.

Afghan Leaders Disown Mujahidin in Saudi Arabia

BK2002091291 Karachi DAWN in English 19 Feb 91 p 6

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 18—Two important leaders of Afghan Mujahidin, Engineer Gulbuddin Hikmatyar and Prof Burhanuddin Rabbani, claimed on Monday that the group of Mujahidin which had gone to Saudi Arabia did not represent the Afghan Interim Government or any other major group of Mujahidin.

Addressing a Press conference here, Engineer Hikmatyar said that no Mujahid had gone to join the foreign troops. "They are few individuals who have been sent by some people to appease the United States. Perhaps they are the people who have never participated in Afghan Jihad," he clarified when reporters asked about the group which had gone to Saudi Arabia recently.

Hikmatyar said "we have fought against alien troops in Afghanistan for more than ten years and how can we now support alien forces in the Gulf."

Another representative of Ettehad-e Eslami Afghanistan (Sayyaf group) also maintained that no Mujahid could ever think to fight against Muslims or to participate in war along with foreign forces.

Prof Burhanuddin Rabbani of Jamiyat-e Eslami Afghanistan said that the decision to send the Afghan group was not taken by the Interim Government of Afghanistan. "This is an unjust war imposed on Iraq. We are not a party to it."

When pressed who decided to send these groups when the decision was not taken by the Afghan Interim Government, Burhanuddin said "this is an individual act of some parties like Mojaddedi's and Gaylani's parties."

Sri Lanka

ROK Planes Refuel in Colombo, Head for Gulf

BK2102091591 Hong Kong AFP in English 0843 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Colombo, Feb 21 (AFP)—Two South Korean military transport planes refuelled at Sri Lanka's main international airport en route to the Gulf war theatre, witnesses said Thursday. The two aircraft were seen

refuelling at the Katunayake International Airport late Wednesday before taking off several hours later, witnesses said.

Photographers were prevented from taking pictures of the aircraft and from approaching the two planes. Airport officials declined to comment.

Civil Aviation Director Upali Malalgoda said earlier that a South Korean military transport plane was cleared for landing here Wednesday for re-fuelling purposes.

The government has allowed U.S-led forces conditional access to ports here following requests from Washington and several other members of the coalition against Iraq. Colombo has said that only aircraft and naval vessels without nuclear weapons or "lethal material" would be permitted to re-fuel.

State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne told reporters Thursday that government policy on refuelling facilities was unchanged but could not say if more Gulf war planes were due here.

Iraqi officials in Colombo have described the government's decision to allow allied aircraft to refuel as an unfriendly act.

(In Seoul, government officials said India this week closed its airspace to three South Korean transport planes that were scheduled to join allied efforts in the Gulf, but later relented.

(India informed South Korea late Tuesday that three C-130 Hercules transport planes would be barred from flying over India as expected Wednesday. The three planes remained grounded in Seoul but were to leave Friday following negotiations between the two countries, officials said.

("There has been some diplomatic problem between India and us. But now it has been cleared," a Defense Ministry spokesman said. "Our planes will leave tomorrow (Friday) exactly on schedule."

(Indian Ambassador L.T. Pudaite [name as received] said India had never closed its air space, adding that New Delhi would comment officially on Thursday. Two C-130s left Seoul for the United Arab Emirates early Tuesday with 75 military personnel, apparently flying over Indian airspace without any problems.)

President To Lift Emergency if Peace Restored

BK1602121391 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 16 Feb 91

[Text] President Ranasinghe Premadasa states that if the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] wished to resume consultations with the government, they should lay down arms and prepare for discussions along with other groups. The president was addressing a meeting held at the Batticaloa Tall Hall yesterday to inform the people of the Batticaloa District and government officers of the new development program launched by the government at village level. Explaining matters further, the president said that the government has not decide war at any stage. [sentence as heard] The government has no confidence in the might of the bullet. The president emphasized that his belief was in the noble qualities of the people. It was innocent civilians who suffered most in a war. The president said that he was dedicated to safeguarding the independence, sovereignty, and unitary status of Sri Lanka. He said on this basis, he was fully prepared to grant the rights and privileges of all sections of the Sri Lankan community. Today, there is no language problem, he said. Constitutionally, Sinhalese and Tamil have been made state languages. All recruitments to every government sector would be on ethnic proportions and on suitable qualifications. The government is prepared to mete out punishment to anyone who violates the government regulations. Parliament has passed legislation to appoint special commission to punish those who violate the language laws.

The president said that under his policy of resolving problems through consultations, compromise, and consensus, he held discussions with the LTTE and in their endeavor on the verge of realizing their aspirations, they launched a war against the state. He described at length how they attacked police stations and caused the deaths of innocent civilians. The president explained that priests as well as innocent Tamil people and Muslims were harassed and some of them killed. The president said at that time all Sinhalese political parties appealed to him to give the necessary powers to the armed forces and the police to establish peace. He said the Armed Forces and the police were now in the process of establishing peace. Actions are being taken to provide essential consumer items, such as food and clothes. Rehabilitation activities are being expedited. The Army and the police are cooperating in locating displaced persons.

The president said if peace is established soon, the emergency will be lifted. Arrangements are being made to hold elections at district level in the northeast.

Government Launches Investment Promotion Drive

BK2002112091 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 20 Feb 91

[Text] The government is going ahead with the latest plan to increase the availability of jobs in an effort to fight unemployment. Foreign investment promotion will play an important role in this program which seeks to attract $200 million in venture capital from abroad annually. The director general of the Greater Colombo Economic Commission, GCEC, Nisanka Wijewardene, said that the government is offering tax relief and a package of incentives to promote foreign investments in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Nisanka Wijewardene announced the government's investment promotion drive at a news conference held at the GCEC head office in Colombo yesterday. He said that investment promotion meetings will be organized in

Colombo from 25 February under the Sri Lanka Investment Forum sponsored by UNDP [United Nations Development Program] and UNIDO [United Nations Industrial Development Organization]. The forum will provide an opportunity to foreign investors to collaborate with local investors in a wide range of projects for which prefeasibility studies have been prepared. The investment forum will be ceremonially inaugurated by the minister of industries, science and technology, Ranil Wickremasinghe, at the BMICH [Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall] on 25 February.

Opposition Leader Beaten in Parliament Brawl

BK2102113191 Hong Kong AFP in English 1123 GMT 21 Feb 91

[Text] Colombo, Feb 21 (AFP)—An unprecedented brawl broke out Thursday in the Sri Lankan parliament with scores of opposition and government MPs [members of parliament] trading blows, witnesses said.

Legislators went at each other as government MPs punched opposition firebrand Vasudeva Nanayakkara of the United Socialist Alliance and dragged him out of the speaker's chair, witnesses said.

Mr. Nanayakkara had taken the chair to protest the ruling party's steamrolling of an agrarian reform bill.

As the fighting continued for 20 minutes with up to 50 MPs joining in, Deputy Chairman Ariya Rekawa went on taking a vote on the controversial bill, which was passed despite the disorder.

MPs who held back from the fighting stood atop desks and shouted, while some thumped desks and threw files at their brawling colleagues. Some ministers tried to break up the fight.

"It was major-scale violence unprecedented in this house," Mr. Nanayakkara told reporters later. "Not even in the state assembly of Tamil Nadu (in south India) you get this type of thing. If this is not state terrorism, what is?"

Mr. Nanayakkara, who was worst hit, said he was suffering from bruises and a black eye. His shirt was torn and wristwatch broken.

He was rolled on the ground past the deputy chairman, who was seated just below the speaker's chair.

"There was total confusion, chaos and violence. Even as I rolled down past the deputy chairman, he was still calling 'clause 45, passed, clause 46, passed.' There was no order in the house," he said.

"In the first round I was swamped. I never expected senior ministers to get involved in fighting. Anyway in the second round, I managed to return some of the blows. I acted in self-defence," Mr. Nanayakkara told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE.

He explained his sitting in the speaker's chair as a "symbolic protest" against what he called the government's undemocratic pushing through of an agrarian services (amendment) bill originally due for next month.

Opposition leader and former premier Sirima Bandaranaike told reporters the entire opposition would indefinitely boycott parliament until the speaker, M.H. Mohammad, guaranteed the safety of MPs inside parliament.

Mr. Mohammad is currently abroad and the opposition would await his return next week to discuss the issue with the government, Mrs. Bandaranaike said.

Government MPs blamed the fracas on Mr. Nanayakkara's taking the speaker's place while proceedings were in progress.

"It was very unfortunate that this happened. I don't think anyone was hurt except the dignity of the house," leader of the house Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is also cabinet spokesman, told reporters.

He accused the opposition of provoking government MPs because of "political frustrations," a charge the opposition parties dismissed as "nonsense."

Secretary-general of the ruling United National Party, Ranjan Wijeratne, said government MPs found guilty of indiscipline would be punished.

Mr. Wijeratne said he was in the house at the time but declined to comment on the fighting, saying it was a matter for the speaker.